

FARMING ACROSS AMERICA



FARMING ACROSS AMERICA
A 300-Year Family History

RONALD H. LIMBAUGH

Hiatt & Dragon
San Francisco

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Portions of this book have been previously published. An earlier version of chapter 2 was published in *Der Kurier* 27 (September 2009): 51–62. A version of chapter 7 was published under the title “The Unheralded West: Pioneering from a Family Perspective,” in Horace Dodd and Robert Long, eds., *Brand Book Number Six: The San Diego Corral of the Westerners* (San Diego: The Corral, 1979), 59–69. A version of chapter 8 was published under the title “From Missouri to the Pacific Northwest: Pioneer Families in the 20th Century,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 91 (Fall 1990): 229–57. An early version of chapter 9 was published in the Summer 2005 issue of the *Oregon Historical Quarterly*. An earlier version of chapter 10 was published in *Idaho Genealogical Society Quarterly* 46 (Winter 2003): 3–16.

Hiatt & Dragon
733 21st Avenue
San Francisco, California
94121

ISBN: 978-0-9792403-1-7

Printed in the United States of America

Designed and produced by Steven Hiatt Editorial Services, San Francisco
Cover design by Stewart Cauley, PollenDesign, New York

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Introduction

This is a selective, personal narrative that spans 300 years of American history, from the early 17th century to the second half of the 20th century. I am the descendant of two farm families, one from the British Isles and the other from Germany. Both struggled to achieve stability and success in a raw and often discordant new society. Most of the progeny of the first migrants stayed on the margins of prosperity all their lives. One historian, writing about the 1930s, described many struggling rural families as “borderline farmers.”¹ In popular terms they were also labeled “dirt farmers,” sometimes with a sneer, as if poor farmers working the soil for a living were not quite respectable.

Although I have not been able to trace both family lines back to their Old World roots, I know enough about them to think that these are both apt characterizations of my own family ancestry. The maps, charts, documents, and photos accompanying these chapters may help those who want more detailed genealogical information, but my primary interest is to write a narrative history that perpetuates the memory of these families who exemplify and personify the rural American heritage.

Using the term “family history” may mislead some readers into assuming this is a comprehensive narrative. I recognize that focusing on my direct line leaves out many relatives and friends who are equally

interesting and worthy of study, but they fall outside the scope of this book. This is essentially local history, written about specific places and people. I have tried to place their lives in context, showing how they were affected by the attitudes, ideas, and events beyond their own particular time and place. In the postmodern world where complexity is the norm and stress the common denominator regardless of country, wealth, or status, understanding local history means recognizing the impact of everyday lives on the “global village.” I draw the story to a close when the rural life closes, at least for most of the people I cover, including myself.

History is not a chronicle of facts but an interpretation of the past based on what is known and what can be inferred from the circumstances. Looking at history this way can be discomfoting to those who seek “truth” and assume that “facts speak for themselves.” But what facts, and how many, are needed for the “truth” to be revealed? Only a few scattered bits and pieces of the past remain for us to puzzle over. Making sense of what’s left is the historian’s job, and the result may not please everyone. Voltaire’s famous comment that history was “a pack of tricks played on the dead” still resonates with some skeptics. Norman Mailer said that history wasn’t really history but “a series of immensely sober novels written by men who often don’t have large literary talents.” He thought novelists were better interpreters of the past. Henry Ford was more succinct. He said that “history is bunk.” But for every sobering view, there are alternative opinions. I like best an old Russian proverb: “Dwell on the past and you’ll lose an eye. But forget the past and you’ll lose both eyes.” The problem, of course, is not finding an opinion that you like, but finding one that you trust.²

Family and personal history are not new disciplines, but they have gained new attention and respect in the postmodern world. The cultural revolution that began in the 1960s has awakened academics to the need for historical reassessment of the lifestyles and values of ordinary people and families like the Limbaughs, Mortimores, and their kinfolk. Analyzing history “from the bottom up” not only has much greater appeal today among graduate students and active professionals, but is also much easier in the computer age. Assessment rolls, legal re-

cords, personal and private correspondence, and other tedious strings of handwritten raw data, once buried and largely ignored, can now be efficiently compiled and analyzed with SPSS and other software programs designed for quantitative analysis. Even more important are the qualitative lessons of the “new history.” Postmodern historical research and analysis have gone a long way to address the fundamental problem intellectual historian Crane Brinton identified a half-century ago: “In the past we have absorbed too many facts and have thought about them too little.”³

What follows is a series of chapters I have written about my own paternal and maternal ancestors. Some earlier versions have been published previously; others are new. They are based on information drawn from secondary works and a variety of family materials gathered over the last fifty years, including courthouse documents, letters, diaries, photographs, recorded interviews, personal reminiscences, scrapbooks, and newspaper clippings. Together these sources cover three centuries of family life, beginning with the first known immigrants and concluding with the last years of the Limbaugh family farm. The family papers are on deposit at the Oregon Historical Society in Portland, and will eventually be available to the public for research. In the meantime, I am doing what I can to preserve the memory of these families and to help understand and interpret the meaning of their lives.



Old World to New: The Early Mortimores

The British Heritage

The Mortimore family tree today is more like an aging bush, with many gaps between the stems and branches. In 2010 a quick online search turned up 290,000 “hits” on the surname Mortimore in the United States and Canada. Mortimore roots have been traced back in time to Normandy before the Battle of Hastings, but British and American genealogists have yet to prepare a comprehensive chart that ties the various family lines together.¹ A recent online phonebook lists 197 Mortimores in England alone, and 81 Mortimers.² The latter spelling is more common in Scotland, where the first Normans with that surname acquired estates after the Conquest of 1066.³

For 500 years the Mortimer name exemplified many of the highs and lows of British history. In England the Mortimers grew rich and powerful as vassals of the Plantagenet kings. They held large estates in the “marches” or border lands of Wales and in Ireland, but their influence waned after they sided with France during the Hundred Years War. In the 15th century the lordly male Mortimer line died out, and after the Wars of the Roses, as Ian Mortimer writes in his family history blog, “all the family estates and titles were subsumed” under the new Tudor monarchy.⁴

Firstcomers to America

Three centuries later, some of the descendents of these medieval Mortimers started life anew in America. By that time many British family members and their descendents had been reduced to landless artisans and peasants. Some in the Scottish lowlands doubtless accepted offers as tenant farmers and servants on confiscated lands in northern Ireland; others were forced off English feudal lands by enclosures. They fled to port cities and growing midland towns to look for work. To ease the burden of poverty and dependency, many large but poor families indentured some of their children to landlords in the new English colonies. As early as the 1630s at least two Mortimers arrived as servants in Virginia. Others came in the 1650s, 1660s, and 1670s, mostly to Virginia and Maryland.

The 17th-century Stuart Restoration, its subsequent demise, and its hapless efforts to reclaim the English crown, provide context for explaining the forced migration of thousands of Irish, Scots, and Welsh dissidents to America from the 1680s to the 1740s. Some had Mortimer surnames. Two Mortimers in the troubled march lands joined a short-lived revolt against James II in 1685. Captured and imprisoned along with a thousand others, they were fortunate to be sentenced to ten years of servitude in the West Indies. Other rebels were hanged or beheaded.

In 1664 the first New England Mortimer appears in the records, possibly an Irish immigrant with a brother named Edward who became a merchant in Boston. They settled into a Calvinist culture geared to commercial exchange. New England port towns grew rapidly in the late 17th century. Despite mercantilist laws designed to benefit the mother country at the expense of its colonies, some Puritan merchants skirted Navigation Act restrictions on a lucrative Atlantic trade involving West Indian sugar, New England ships, rum and foodstuffs, and African slaves.⁵

The slave trade by the 18th century had drawn in several Mortimers, including an English ship captain, Philip Mortimer, who transported slaves from Senegambia on the west coast of Africa to Portugal in the 1730s. Between 1713 and 1730 the British galley *Mortimer* carried cargo,

including apprenticed youth and probably slaves, between the English port of Bristol and Virginia. British ship captains with the Mortimer surname remained active in the slave trade at least until the banning of trans-Atlantic transport of slaves to the United States in 1808.⁶

Some American Mortimers along the southern tidewater also had a stake in the slave trade. Philip Mortimer may or may not have known an American mercantile “cousin,” Richard Mortimore, who was quarantined in 1738 aboard a ship on Black River off Wilmington in North Carolina, after landing a cargo from the South that included a slave with smallpox. Twenty years later Dr. John Mortimer, probably a relative of the earlier merchant, attended to the medical needs of slaveholders and their property in and around Wilmington. In 1760 he filed a claim with the county to collect a fee “for castrating and attending a negro called Quaugh” after his owner evidently went bankrupt.⁷

Mortimer-Mortimore family history is far too complex and multifaceted to attempt a comprehensive narrative. My contribution to the family story deals only with the branch that directly links to my own line of Mortimores, but even that narrow focus has been difficult because of significant gaps in the early record.

Historians and genealogists have been working for some years trying to document the bridge connection between the West Coast branch of the Mortimore line and the British diaspora of Scots, Scots-Irish, and English Mortimers. So far the effort has proved fruitless. Finding the direct link among the nearly fifty individuals with likely surnames that appear in imperial and colonial documents between 1630 and 1750 will require an exhaustive examination of thousands of records in public and private archives on both sides of the Atlantic. Even if some bold researcher decides to invest time and treasure in this noble quest, gaps in the historical record pose a very high risk of failure.

With this caveat in mind, let me turn to my own family narrative. My first interest in the family story stems from the treasure trove of old letters my pious maternal grandmother kept in her purse. She often cared for me when I was a toddler while my own parents worked on their farm in Idaho. In manners and morals she was fundamentalist to the core. She never wore jewelry, never had a compact or other van-

Table 1 Mortimore/Mortemore/Mortimer Surnames in England & Colonial America before 1750

Date	Surname	First Name	Place	Remarks
1630	Mortimer	Rowland	Virginia	[Passage pd?] by John Lewis, Isle of Wight County
1635	Mortimer	Thomas	Virginia	Transport from London via <i>Primrose</i>
1639	Mortimer	Rowland	Virginia	[Passage pd?] by John Lewin, merchant, Isle of Wight County
1652	Mortemore	Henry	Maryland	Transported 1652
1660	Mortemore	George	Maryland	Transported 1660
1663–79	Mortimore	John	Virginia	Servant to plantation; bound from Bristol
1664	Mortimer	Richard	Boston	Possible brother of Edward, 1674
1672	Mortimer	Marke	Virginia	Bound from London via <i>William & Mary</i>
1674	Mortimer	Edward	Boston	Boston merchant; possible immigrant from Ireland
1674	Mortimore	John	Virginia	Apprenticed in Bristol to Aaron Prance, 4 years
1675	Mortimer	Hugh	Virginia	Bound from London via <i>Unicorn</i>
1675	Mortimer	Mark	Virginia	Bound from London via <i>Hope</i>
1676	Mortimer	Edward	Boston	Son of Edward, 1674
1679	Mortimore	George	Northumberland Co., Virginia	
1680	Mortimer	Mark	New York	Son of William M. of Upavon, Wiltshire; bound from London via <i>Susan</i>
1680	Mortimer	Richard	Boston	Son of Edward, 1674
1680	Mortimer	Thomas	New London, Conn.	Constable
1684–85	Mortemore	James	Virginia	Age 16; bound servant
1684	Mortimer	Robert	Jamaica	Apprenticed in London to Thomas Green for 4 years
1685	Mortimer	Peter	West Indies	Prisoner sent to 10 years' slavery for participating in Monmouth's Rebellion
1685	Mortimer	Roger	West Indies	Prisoner sent to 10 years' slavery for participating in Monmouth's Rebellion
1688	Mortimer	Robert	Boston	Son of Edward, 1674
1701	Mortimore	James	Virginia	

Table 1 (*Continued*)

Date	Surname	First Name	Place	Remarks
1704	Mortmore	James	Virginia	
1704	Mortimore	John	Calvert Co., Md.	
1713	Mortmore	Farragon	Virginia	Age 6; son of James; bound servant to age 21
1714	Mortmore	John	Calvert Co., Md.	
1716	Mortimer	Alexander	Maryland	Jacobite rebel of 1716; sentenced to 7 years' slavery and sold to a Maryland landowner
1716	Mortimore	George	Jamaica	
1720	Mortimore	John	Calvert Co., Md.	Sold land with clouded title in Baltimore Co. to John Deavour
1724	Mortimore	Edward	Maryland	Landing certificate
1725	Mortimer	Alexander	Maryland	Bound to John Dykes
1725	Mortimer	Edward	Maryland	Sentenced to transportation
1726	Mortimore	Edward	Annapolis, Md.	Ref. Coldham, <i>Bonded Passengers</i>
1730	Mortimer	Nathaniel	Massachusetts	Bound from Bristol to Edward Iff
1734	Mortimer	Edward	Maryland	Servant, ran away from master in Baltimore Co.; a "true Newgate breed"
1734	Mortimore	Robert	Pennsylvania	Married Anne Barnwell, 22 October 1734
1737	Mortimore	John	?	Prisoner sent to America from Ireland; ref McDonnell, <i>Emigrants from Ireland to America</i>
1737	Mortimore	William	Queen Anne's Co., Maryland	Debtor to estate of William Hemsley
1738	Mortimore	Richard	North Carolina	Merchant, Newton, N.C.; quarantined for pox
1738	Mortimore	Thomas	Chowan pct., Md.	Witness to will of J. Boyintone, 25 Sept. 1738
1740	Mortimor	Luke		Sentenced to transportation
1741–42	Mortimore	William	North Carolina?	Private in Gooch's Amer. Reg't; aboard fireship <i>Strombolo</i> 7 Feb. 1741, discharged 6 Dec. 1742 from ship <i>Seahorse</i>
1745	Mortimore	Edward	Baltimore Co., Md.	Reports runaway servant man named Thomas King
1749	Mortimore	William	Maryland	Ref. Sherwood, <i>American Colonists in English Records</i> (1982)
1749	Mortimer	Richard	Nova Scotia	
1750	Mortimer	Thomas	Maryland	Administrator for estate of Margaret Burley

ity items women carried around, but almost everywhere she went she carried an old purse. In it were family letters, her most valued personal belongings. Those letters always intrigued me. If I behaved properly she would reward me by taking out those old, fragile documents and telling me a story about them. She told me of her father's sickness as a Civil War soldier, of her family's pioneer days in Kansas, of sitting in the potato cellar, scared to death of the storm raging overhead, of crossing the plains on an immigrant train to Oregon. I couldn't read then, but when I could I pestered her so much she finally let me read them for myself. The names of those dead ancestors became personalities who talked to me directly through those letters. They are now part of the Mortimore family archives at the Oregon Historical Society in Portland.

Later, as a graduate student I began gathering more stories to put flesh on the bones of those stories about early family members. With a reel-to-reel recorder I spent many hours interviewing elders on both sides of the family. All my grandparents were dead by then, but my mother, one uncle, and various aunts and cousins provided enough background to help me trace the lines backward. I also gathered family papers and created a family archive. From these sources, plus the broader literary record found in public and private archives, libraries, and media collections around the country and abroad, I have reconstructed much of the Mortimore family story. Yet many mysteries remain, especially in the fog that surrounds the Old World roots of our direct line.

The first solid lead that ties the Oregon Mortimores to their East Coast ancestors came from researchers working with land records from colonial North Carolina. In 2003 my cousin David Mortimore sent me a summary of family data he had obtained from Eva Goeken, an experienced genealogist. She had traced our common branch of the Mortimore line back to the earliest direct ancestor in the historical record, William Mortimore, who in 1779 acquired a patent for land in Guilford County, North Carolina.

Who was William Mortimore, and where did he come from? My cousins and I were mystified by this news. Eva linked William Morti-

more to our great grandfather, David Mortimore. Prior to her letter our sources were a few Bible records and a vague family oral history that hinted at Indiana as David's birthplace. He died in 1905 near Oregon City, Oregon, but left almost nothing behind that might be helpful to family historians. Eva greatly informed our quest and provided the incentive for deeper exploration.

The Carolina Scots-Irish

Until more specific linkages are confirmed we can only speculate about William Mortimore and his family in this early period. But family history is best understood in the context of the times. The Mortimore presence in North Carolina is one small segment of a larger narrative that begins with 18th-century colonial immigration and development under British rule.

Before the revolution, the British Isles provided the bulk of European immigrants to the thirteen colonies, with Germany following close behind. Obviously the Mortimores were not German, but is there sufficient evidence to link them to one of the three or four distinctive British ethnic identities? Were they Scots, Scots-Irish from Ulster (northern Ireland), English, or even Welsh? Given what we have said above about the early Mortimer-Mortimore lines in Britain, the North Carolina branch could conceivably stem from any of these groups. Religious identity is also an important variable that distinguishes them. British colonial history is replete with competing belief systems and religious conflict at both the imperial and local levels. Further complicating the picture were turbulent political rivalries in Britain and its colonies. Each of these ethnic groups represented political factions that resented the coalition of English mercantile elites and aristocrats, collectively known as Tories, who controlled Parliament. Opponents of parliamentary rule coalesced under the Whig banner on both sides of the Atlantic. Where do the North Carolina Mortimores fit within this complex ethnic, political, and social mosaic?

Even without specific empirical or forensic evidence, we don't need a CSI team to figure this out. I think the answer is deductible from the historical record, which I try to demonstrate below. William Mor-

Table 2 The Mortimore Line

1	William Mortimore b. Abt. 1740 d. Abt. 1808, North Carolina
2	Robert Mortimore b. Abt. 1771 d. Aug. 1841, Madison County, Ohio
2	Sally Mortimore b. Abt. 1773
2	Israel Mortimore b. Abt. 1775
2	David Mortimore b. Bef. 1775, North Carolina d. Bef. 1850, Elkhart, Indiana + Hanna [Plemworth?] b. Abt. 1780, North Carolina d. Bet. 1850 and 1860
3	Charlotte Mortimore b. Abt. 1798 d. 26 March 1849
3	William Mortimore b. Abt. 1800 d. 5 March 1844, Fountain County, Indiana
3	Thomas Plemworth [Plymouth] Mortimore b. 2 Oct. 1803 d. 6 Jan. 1870, Miami Co., Kansas + Patsy Deshill [Driskill?] b. 16 Jan. 1809, North Carolina d. 25 May 1883, Sugar Creek, Miami Co., Kansas
4	William Mortimore b. 20 Dec. 1827, Ohio
4	Elizabeth Mortimore b. 29 Nov. 1830, Indiana d. 27 July 1862, Lincoln Co., Wyoming
4	David Mortimore b. 13 Dec. 1832, Elkhart Co., Indiana d. 19 March 1905, Clackamas Co., Oregon + Sarah Jane Fenton b. 3 Sept. 1830, Guernsey Co., Ohio d. 19 March 1881
5	Miranda May Mortimore b. 30 March
5	Marinda Bell Mortimore b. 24 Sept.
5	Roxena Jane Mortimore b. 9 Oct. 1854 d. Abt. 1878, Oregon?
5	Anna Eliza Mortimore b. 17 June 1856
5	Elma "Ella" Craig Mortimore b. 16 Sept. 1857
5	John Plemworth Mortimore b. 25 July 1859
5	Mary Elizabeth Mortimore b. 22 Nov. 1860
5	Emma Louiza Mortimore b. 2 Oct. 1862
5	Edward Merritt Fenton Mortimore b. 28 May 1865, Iowa d. 5 Sept. 1943, Ontario, Malheur Co., Oregon + Hattie D. Hugben b. Abt. 1867, Clackamas Co., Oregon d. Abt. 1894
6	Merton Thorpe Mortimore b. 1 Jan. 1887 d. 4 Oct. 1989, Oregon
6	Olive Hazel Mortimore b. 25 Dec. 1889, Mollala, Clackamas Co., Oregon d. 30 Aug. 1970, Portland, Oregon + Martha Elizabeth Tucker b. 1 June 1875, Winfield, Kansas d. 14 Dec. 1962, Ontario, Oregon
6	Evelyn Eloise Mortimore b. 2 June 1903, Madras, Oregon d. 24 Sept. 1994, Lodi, California
6	Paul DeForrest Mortimore b. 6 June 1899, Oregon d. 3 July 1959, Ellensburg, Washington
5	Sarah Evaline "Eva" Mortimore b. 14 March 1867
5	Elza Clark Mortimore b. 30 July 1869 + Alsa Hugben d. 17 March 1889, Clackamas Co., Oregon
4	Eliza Jane Mortimore b. 4 June 1835, Indiana
4	Mary Mortimore b. Abt. 1837, Indiana
4	Patsy Alice Mortimore b. 19 Oct. 1839, Indiana
3	Alfred Mortimore b. Abt. 1816, Ohio
3	Newton Mortimore b. Abt. 1818, Ohio
3	David Mortimore b. Abt. 1819, Ohio d. 14 Jan. 1875, Kosciusko Co., Indiana
3	Nancy Mortimore b. Abt. 1820

timore was most likely a Scots-Irish Presbyterian, possibly a Quaker, probably an Ulster immigrant to Pennsylvania who arrived in North Carolina sometime in the 1740s or 1750s. During the revolution, although he avoided direct participation, he and his family clearly identified with the Patriot or Whig cause.

Between 1715 and 1760 an estimated 250,000 impoverished Scots-Irish immigrants came to America. They were driven in part by religious and economic discrimination, but also by hunger. In 1740–41 a famine of immense proportions killed an estimated 400,000 in Ireland. Most of the newcomers landed at Philadelphia, with lesser numbers coming by way of New York, Boston, Charleston, and other ports. Tidewater lands were occupied and too costly for poorer immigrants. They headed west until they found cheaper land at the margins of settlement. Those moving west from Philadelphia settled temporarily in Lancaster County on the western frontier, then as land values rose they migrated southward for some 400 miles along the Great Wagon Road that connected western Pennsylvania with the Carolina midlands. Many settled along the creeks and rivers of the North Carolina Piedmont, where land was still available. Some Scots-Irish settlers began occupying lands along the Eno and Haw Rivers as early as 1738. They were part of a Presbyterian enclave that crossed into the Carolina highlands from the backcountry of Virginia. Although the Shenandoah Valley still had open land, most of these Calvinist immigrants refused to settle in Virginia because of religious restrictions and fees imposed by the Episcopal establishment. North and South Carolina had no such restrictions, and under friendly royal governors the southern colonies invited religious dissenters. In 1752 Orange County was formed to accommodate the newcomers, and a year later the colonial assembly carved out Rowan County as population grew. Despite shrinking boundaries, by 1767 Orange County had the largest population of any county in the colony.⁸

South Carolina was especially inviting to certain newcomers. In 1761 the South Carolina government, in part to encourage interior settlement and establish a stable population bulwark against Indian encroachment, offered land bounties and cash subsidies to European

immigrants, provided they were “behaving members of Protestant congregations.” Ulster Presbyterians were the largest beneficiaries, but hundreds also arrived from England, Germany, Holland, and France. The bulk of these immigrant families disembarked at Charleston and moved inland up the Pee Dee and Catawba Rivers to settle on open lands in the Appalachian highlands. Some crossed the vague boundary that then separated the two Carolinas, merging with immigrants coming south from Pennsylvania.⁹

Before proceeding to demonstrate the Mortimore link to this Scots-Irish background, I need to digress a moment to consider two other possibilities. Earlier I mentioned both Scottish and English immigrants to the colonial South. Highland Scottish clansmen, grateful to the British Crown after 1745 for granting pardons to those willing to emigrate after the last disastrous effort to restore the Stuart monarchy, settled in the upper Cape Fear Valley of North Carolina. During the Revolution many remained loyal to England. Some fought on the British side and suffered severely for it. Most lost their lands after the war; some lost their lives in the fierce partisan attacks on them.¹⁰ The fact that the Mortimores secured land in North Carolina under Whig rule and lived peacefully for twenty years before selling it is *prima facie* evidence they identified with the Whig cause. They were definitely not part of the clannish Highland Scot tradition.

The Quakers were another immigrant group that might have had links to the Mortimore clan. They entered the South in ever-increasing numbers after the 1730s, drawn by the same push/pull factors that attracted the Scots-Irish. Their presence alarmed high-church officials, as this 1760 report from an Anglican cleric in New Bern, North Carolina, a tidewater town in Craven County, suggests:

I shall not be able to inform the society of the number of actual communicants of the Church of England in the whole county... as to the number of dissenters & of those who profess themselves members of the Church of Engd I cannot pretend at present to be very exact, there are too many that can hardly be said to be members of any particular christian society, and great number of

dissenters of all denominations come & settled amongst us from New Engd Particularly, Anabaptists, Methodist, Quakers and Presbyterians, the anabaptist are obstinate, illiterate & grossly ignorant, the Methodist, ignorant, censorious & uncharitable, the Quakers, Rigid, but the Presbyterians are pretty moderate except here & there a bigot or rigid Calvinist. As for papists, I cannot learn there are above 9 or 10 in the whole County.¹¹

Out of memory and personal experiences as a child I have been drawn almost instinctively to the Quakers. My maternal grandparents often expressed what later I recognized as some familiar Quaker characteristics: extreme modesty in dress and manners; pious soul-searching; unquestioned faith in biblical teachings; egalitarianism and brotherly love, even to the point of using the familiar “brother” and “sister” to address friends and relatives; emphasis on personal salvation, individual moral responsibility, and the existential “inner plantation.” These are not exclusively Quaker traits, of course, but part of a broader European pietist tradition. My grandparents were not Quakers but Free Methodists, a distinctive pietist sect more akin to German Mennonites than English Quakers. Yet could the North Carolina Mortimores have been Quakers whose progeny eventually transformed into Free Methodists and Nazarenes as they moved West? It is a definite possibility, for some Quakers had Scots-Irish backgrounds.¹²

Unfortunately, no documentation has been found to tie the Mortimores directly to the Quakers, but there is some positive, though circumstantial, evidence to suggest that they were Scots-Irish. We do not know exactly when William Mortimore arrived in North Carolina, but the first definite reference to him is in 1768 on a Rowan County tax list. This suggests that William was at least twenty-one at that time, and that he claimed land in Rowan County. No records have been located to identify his wife, but it is clear that he married at a young age and had at least two children by 1773. Since Rowan was carved from Orange County and later reduced in size when Guilford was created in 1770, William and his family most likely were living on the same Haw River property he patented eleven years later. If he was born in the

mid-1740s he obviously missed the War of Jenkins' Ear (1739–41), during which another William Mortimore, a militia volunteer from North Carolina, participated. But he could easily have been the senior Mortimore's son. We will probably never be able to document this possible paternal linkage, but the fact that the senior Mortimore joined the military lends some credence to the argument that the Mortimores, like other Scots-Irish, were fighters, not pacifists.¹³

Knowledge of settlement patterns in the Carolina Piedmont is also an important aid to identifying the ethnic and religious background of individuals and families. New immigrants then and now settle where they are most welcome. In the 18th-century North Carolina back country, as on other colonial frontiers, new residents settled not as individuals but as part of a like-minded community. The late historian Louis B. Wright argued that new frontier communities replicated the cultural patterns of their immediate ancestors. For reasons of mutual protection and cultural identity, they located near others who spoke the same language, practiced the same religion, and displayed similar ethnic and racial characteristics.¹⁴

Guilford Landowners on the Haw River

These settlement patterns show clearly in what became Guilford County. Early settlers were both religious and conscious of their ethnic identity. Scots-Irish Presbyterians were the most numerous. East of them were enclaves of Germans; to the west and south were bands of Quakers and German Lutherans. But along the Haw River near the Reedy Branch (not the Reedy Fork, further downriver) where the Mortimores first settled, were nearly 100 neighbors much like themselves.¹⁵

Religious and cultural cohesion promoted stability and mutual aid. It also strengthened the political power of the Carolina midlands and exacerbated the disparities between inland farmers and Tidewater planters. By the 1750s, slavery had become entrenched in the fertile southern Tidewater plantations where rice and tobacco grew best. Cotton was still a limited commodity that would not transform the interior South until new technology introduced after 1800 made mass production possible. Tidewater aristocrats at mid-century owned the

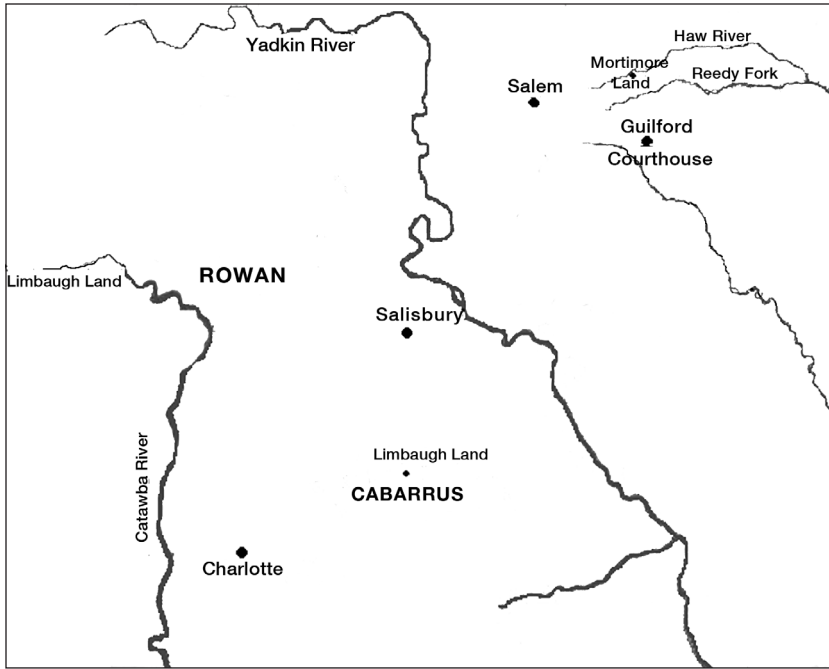


Figure 1 The Carolina Piedmont

Home to Cherokee and other native Americans long before Europeans arrived, the Carolina Piedmont under British colonial rule saw slow settlement until the 1750s. In the Revolutionary Era during the last half of the 18th century, the area attracted a diverse ethnic and cultural mix of European small farmers from both the British Isles and the Continent. Among them were the Mortimores, who settled as early as the 1740s along the Haw River, and the Limbaughs, who arrived in the early 1790s to claim land on the tributaries of the Yadkin and Catawba Rivers. Successive generations of both families spread westward on parallel paths, but did not meet until they reached Oregon after 1900.

best land, controlled most of the political and economic power, and dominated the colonial government. Land was less valuable along the Appalachian Piedmont, where poor transportation and uncleared land made commercial agriculture difficult. Subsistence farmers like the Mortimores hunted game; made their own clothes, shoes, and furniture; and grew their own corn and grain on small plots cleared from the woody slopes and alluvial valleys. Commerce was limited and cash scarce in the colonial economy. Yet the tax burden was substantial and regressive, with every white male paying the same rate regardless of economic status. Under the circumstances, whatever money Piedmont

farmers could earn went to pay taxes, or to buy salt, coffee, cloth, metals, and other necessities they couldn't produce themselves. Slavery was not unknown in the area, but only 8 percent of landowners in the Carolina Piedmont owned slaves. The Scots-Irish did not oppose slavery on moral grounds, but few back country farmers could afford to buy slaves, and many abhorred the stigma of free white men working alongside enslaved Africans.¹⁶

Under such strained economic circumstances prosperity was elusive. By mid-century many inland farmers raised their voices to protest inequitable taxes, corrupt local officials, and unfair representation in a government controlled by powerful Tidewater planters. The protestors grew stronger as their numbers increased with the arrival in the 1750s and 1760s of English religious dissidents, Highland Scots, Scots-Irish, and Germans. Discontent boiled over during an insurrectionary period known as the Regulator Movement. In 1770 the colonial Assembly created Guilford County out of parts of Anson and Rowan to isolate some of the upland dissidents and appease their demands. But these concessions were too late and too little to stop the insurrection. It reached a violent climax a year later when 1,500 militia called out by the governor crushed the opposition at the Battle of Alamance.¹⁷

The Regulator Movement came on the verge of a broader colonial discontent that stemmed from Britain's attempt to tighten imperial control over its colonies. The revolt that began in New England spread quickly after the British responded with increasingly harsher measures. By 1776 it had rolled over old royal governments from Maine to Georgia, replacing the king's representatives with uncompromising Patriots. Like their political cousins in England who opposed the Tory influence over Parliament, American Patriots identified with the radical Whig cause. They objected to imperial interference in colonial affairs, demanded self-rule at every level of government, and called their countrymen to arms.¹⁸

As the war progressed American Whigs grew increasingly radicalized. They stigmatized anyone who did not openly support independence as a "loyalist," or opponent of revolution. Patriot governments required loyalty oaths and confiscated the property of those not taking

the oath. Loyalist minorities foolish enough to resist were evicted by Patriot officials or chased out by Patriot gangs. Most left peacefully, and their forfeited lands were eventually thrown open to settlement. In the four North Carolina counties of Guilford, Rowan, Orange, and Randolph, more than 40,000 acres were confiscated and sold between 1776 and 1787, a boon to county coffers as well as to farmers in the high country. Most of this land came from the son of a London merchant and land speculator, Henry Eustace McCulloch.¹⁹

At first I wondered if William Mortimore and his Scots-Irish neighbors had settled on what Tories considered stolen property. Fortunately, Carolina land transactions are well documented, and none of the Haw River lands I studied had been owned by Loyalists or involved in revolutionary confiscations. They had been part of the vast holdings of the Earl of Granville, one of the eight original proprietors of the Carolina colonies.

Land legislation was a high priority of the first General Assembly after the revolution. Some land titles in North Carolina dated to the 17th century, when the Carolinas were proprietary colonies. In 1729, under pressure from the Crown, all but one proprietor, Lord Carteret, Earl of Granville, surrendered their interests to George II for a cash settlement amounting to a few pennies per acre. Thereafter the Carolinas were divided and became Royal colonies. Granville kept his land holdings, defined in 1743 as essentially the northern half of North Carolina. From the 1740s until the early 1760s land patents and grants in that vast area were issued in his name. But upon his death in 1763 the Granville land office closed, leaving settlers on Granville lands without any means to clear title. South of the Granville tract, patents were issued in the name of the Crown until 1775, when the Royal land office closed. Settlers there were thus in the same legal limbo as those to the north: both needed a legal means to assert ownership of land they occupied but never patented.²⁰

Late in 1777 the new state legislature approved the Land Grant Act to address these problems, as well as to attract friendly new immigrants and reduce the power of opposing voices in the remote upland hills and valleys. Only the economic purpose was emphasized in the pre-

amble to the act: "Whereas, it is expedient that the Lands within this State should be parceled out to industrious People, for the Settlement thereof, and increasing the Strength and Number of the People of the Country, by affording an easy and comfortable Subsistence for Families." Any resident or immigrant intending to reside in North Carolina could acquire up to 640 acres of unclaimed land, provided the claimant took the test oath and paid £5 per 100 acres, the equivalent of \$110 in current dollars. Although the language was gender neutral, clearly the lawmakers had men in mind. Any head of family could claim an additional 100 acres for "his Wife and each of his children." Claimants had to prepare a "Writing," essentially a description of the claim location and the "nearest Water Courses and remarkable Places" within or bounding the claim. These writings were to be used by "Entry Takers," i.e., county recorders, to confirm that the land was unencumbered and uncontested. Disputed claims were to be settled by jury trial in county courts prior to patenting. In many cases, due to prior claims the writings described more land than was actually available, leaving surveyors the task of determining the practical boundaries of a new claim. Once confirmed and surveyed, the claim went to the secretary of state, who issued a state land grant patent. In the first year under the new law, 102 Guilford County applicants received patents. Acreages ranged from 50 to 640 acres, averaging about 390 acres per patent.²¹

Patents issued to Haw River claimants under the Land Grant Act support my earlier speculations about the ethnic background of the Mortimores. Some claims in the immediate vicinity dated from the 1750s, at least a decade before the Mortimores arrived. In 1778, the same year that William Mortimore applied for 640 acres, twenty-two other neighbors received patents. A year later, Mortimore's patent, along with those of thirteen other neighbors, was granted after a survey reduced it to 526 acres. Though their origins are mostly obscure, all the evidence suggests these new landowners were Scots-Irish.²²

To test the premise that the Mortimores were similar to their neighbors, I looked at a regional sample of ninety-five Guilford County heads of families who held land patents or claims between 1750 and 1800 within a five-mile radius of the Mortimore property. Contemporary

public records provide enough data to suggest some common social, political, and economic characteristics among them. The most obvious was the predominance of British surnames. Over 50 percent were English, and 47 percent Scots-Irish. I found few references to religious affiliations, although at least one resident was a prominent Presbyterian and eleven were Quaker. Most were probably American-born migrants to the Carolinas, but some were immigrants from various parts in the British Isles. Many had very large estates. For those claiming land under the 1777 Land Grant Act, the average holding was nearly 450 acres. Historian Camille Wells, studying Tidewater plantations in Virginia during the same period, found only 15 percent were 400 acres or larger. Of course, the mid-century Carolina Piedmont contained remote frontier farms rather than highly specialized coastal rice and tobacco plantations. Clearing land was a difficult task for land-rich but cash-poor farmers, dependent not on slaves for labor but on family and neighbors.²³

The incongruity between large estates and limited production suggests that at least some of these Guilford landowners were more interested in land speculation than farming. Much further research is needed to test this hypothesis, but some preliminary data on land transactions and turnover rates are suggestive. Sixteen were actively involved in buying and selling property, especially after the war ended in 1782. Only nine of those sixteen appeared in the 1790 Federal Census, along with twenty-two others not associated with real estate transactions. The census may not be a reliable guide to absentee ownership, however. Jury rosters, road crew lists, and other data from county court records show that regardless of their census status, nearly half of the ninety-five were active community members.²⁴

At least nine of the ninety-five landowners died before 1790, including Samuel McCracken, who evidently had been a close friend of the Mortimores. His background offers additional clues to William Mortimore's immediate ancestry. The McCrackens (or McCrachsens) were from County Down in northern Ireland, where Samuel was born in 1739. When he first arrived in America is unknown, but in the 1760s a Samuel McCrackin appears on the militia rolls in Virginia. He was

court-martialed for delinquency in 1767 and apparently discharged. Within two years of this Virginia service, a Samuel McCracken settled along the Haw River in what was then Rowan County, five miles southwest of William Mortimore's holdings. These two farmers must have worked together, sharing the common tasks of clearing and cultivating land.²⁵

In 1769, Samuel McCracken married Jane Young. William Mortimore may have stood with his friend at the ceremony, since he was the couple's bondsman. Several years older than Mortimore, McCracken apparently was also less active in local political or legal affairs. He did not join Mortimore and 248 other residents of Guilford County in 1773 in a petition to the county commissioners to oppose relocation of the county seat, including the courthouse, prison, and stocks. McCracken was not called to jury duty or road service as frequently as William Mortimore. He died in 1781 at age forty-two, leaving the Haw River property to his widow Jane and seven children, six under the age of sixteen.²⁶

Military Campaigns and the Carolina Piedmont

The southern states played a crucial role in the war for independence, and Guilford County residents, regardless of personal predilections, were in the thick of fighting. Though New England and the Northeast took the brunt of battle in the early years, the loss of Savannah early in 1779 opened the South to a British invasion led by Sir Henry Clinton. After a year in preparation, Clinton's superior forces launched a siege of Charleston in March 1780 and captured it a month later, exposing the interior and leaving North Carolina vulnerable. Clinton returned to New York after the Charleston victory, leaving Lord Cornwallis and some 11,000 British troops behind to complete the conquest of the South. The slow start to a new British offensive in the summer of 1780 allowed the Americans time to rebuild, but Congress refused to heed the advice of General Washington and instead appointed an incompetent general, Horatio Gates, to the southern command. The rout he suffered at Camden in August 1780 was a severe blow to American forces, but Cornwallis did not follow up his victory. His overconfidence

was a gift to the American cause. Again the Patriot forces rebuilt under a new commander, Nathaniel Greene, using a combination of regular troops and state militia.²⁷

The Americans were ready when Cornwallis resumed the offensive in the fall of 1780, sending 1,000 men under Patrick Ferguson to destroy opposing forces in the Carolina Piedmont. At the Battle of King's Mountain on the border of the two Carolinas, militia mountaineers surprised the British with a frontal assault. Ferguson was killed and most of his men captured or killed. The achievement at King's Mountain, followed by the brilliant work of Daniel Morgan's militia at Cowpens, helped turn the tide of the southern campaign.²⁸

Greene, Washington's best field strategist, drew Cornwallis into a classic defensive trap by splitting his forces in the face of a much larger enemy. Cornwallis took the bait. Trying to kill or capture retreating Americans, he advanced into enemy territory in the dead of winter. His account of the expedition as he approached Guilford is a lesson in frustration:

... I was in great hopes that he [Greene] would not escape me without receiving a blow. Nothing could exceed the patience and Alacrity of the Officers and Soldiers, under every species of hardship and fatigue, in endeavoring to overtake him; but our intelligence ... was exceedingly defective, which, with heavy rains, bad roads, and the passage of many deep Creeks, and bridges destroyed by the Enemy's Light Troops, rendered all our exertions vain....²⁹

On 6 March 1781, Cornwallis crossed into Guilford County at Weitzell's Mill on the Reedy Fork of the Haw River. Some of Greene's men were waiting. They fired a few volleys, then made "a timely and precipitate retreat over the Haw," as the British general reported, rejoining the main body of Americans. Reinforced by regulars from the North and local militia, Greene gathered his army at Guilford Courthouse. Both sides were eager for a fight. Cornwallis began the action 15 March with a cannonade, followed by a battle line of seasoned

infantry, marching forward in tight formation with fixed bayonets. Opposing them were untested North Carolina militia, first in the American line. They fired one volley at 150 yards and a second at 40 yards, causing severe damage but failing to stop the advancing troops. Lacking bayonets themselves, they fell back in some disorder, upsetting a second line of militia who also fell back in retreat. Greene's third line of Continentals stood their ground, engaging the British in a fierce and bloody fight until Cornwallis called up his reserves. Greene then retired from the field to avoid risking his army, leaving Cornwallis with a tactical but hollow victory.³⁰

Far from their supply base, the British were exposed and vulnerable. Cornwallis quickly pulled back to the coast in order to resupply, leaving the inland South to the Americans. In frustration Cornwallis then marched his army north to Virginia, with the Americans nipping at his heels. All know his fate at Yorktown in October, the last major battle of the war.

One of the many questions regarding William Mortimore is what role, if any, did he play in these southern military operations? The road he lived on was in constant use as British and American forces penetrated the back country during the campaigns of 1780–81. Regardless of religious or political affiliation, Guilford residents were frequent victims of marching armies and marauding gangs on both sides, who often used patriotism or revenge as pretexts. Procurement officers requisitioned their cattle and mules. Field commanders let troops forage through their fields and barnyards. One resident was at home “in the peace of God,” when suddenly a militia colonel arrived and took away his slaves. Another, a militiaman, returned from a muster to find that his father's house had been stripped of furniture and that a wagon and team were missing, loaded “with as much corn as they could carry.”³¹

Even if they managed to avoid warfare's “collateral damage,” Guilford citizens were subject to compulsory service requirements. The North Carolina Militia Act of 1775 divided the state into six military districts and organized a battalion within each, consisting of 33 field officers, 40 noncoms, and 500 privates in ten companies of 50 men apiece. These “Minute Men” were to train for fourteen days and then

muster at least once every twenty days. They were subject to active duty within their district if called to “immediate Service” by their commanding officer. At each call the recruits had to be gathered together from scattered areas, organized into companies and regiments, and trained and marched to the fighting front, a process taking weeks or months. While they were absent their farms and families were especially vulnerable.³²

The Militia Act preferred recruits with their own weapons over those who had no arms, but if necessary, enlisting captains could “borrow such guns as are fit for Service” and pay the lender about \$1.20 per year for a “good smooth bore or Musket.” Later legislation established procurement officers for each county, who were authorized to receive weapons confiscated from Tories and to purchase additional guns from “Quakers, Moravians and Dunkards,” or anyone else (except militia-men). Apparently no stigma was attached to religious dissidents who refused to sell their weapons. The legislature decreed that they receive the “full value thereof; but that no compulsion be exercised to induce them to this duty.” In practice, it was doubtless hard to resist the pressure of local militia officers desperate for arms.³³

Guilford County minutemen were called to muster several times during the war, but a legacy of suspicion and distrust from the Regulator era had a chilling effect on recruitment. Despite severe penalties, few volunteered willingly. As historian John R. Maass writes, “not only were draftees resistant to conscription, but they also attempted by crafty means to avoid serving once their names were balloted.” Local militia officers in some cases had to impress their own countrymen to fill quotas. Of the 156 county recruits called to fill a requisition for Continental infantry in 1778, only 30 stepped forward; the rest were selected by lot from a local duty roster.³⁴

Piedmont families were also put off by the discrepancies between rewards and punishment. The Militia Act promised raw recruits about 25 cents per day—half the going wage for unskilled farm workers. Even that meager amount might be reduced or withheld because of inflation, currency debasement, appropriation delays, or bureaucratic malfeasance. In 1775, fifty men and officers gathered to march toward

Fayetteville in Cumberland County to put down an insurrection of Highland Scots and Loyalists, but before they arrived militiamen from another county routed the Tories at Moore's Creek Bridge. Both militia units expected compensation for services rendered, but they had to wait three years before they were paid. In the meantime, one Guilford group petitioned the General Assembly, demanding "some reward for attending committee, sitting, and disarming the Tories, etc." That was a brazen affront to patriotism, easily ignored. Other claims perhaps had more merit, but many fell through the cracks because of poor record-keeping. In 1844, an eighty-year-old Guilford veteran signed a petition claiming that he had been drafted in 1781 and had fought at Guilford Courthouse until his company fled. Later he was captured and spent the rest of the war imprisoned in England. After the war the British sent him to France, where the American consul gave him enough money for passage home. For all his service time he never received a cent of pay.³⁵

The prospect of fighting Indians attracted more recruits than fighting the British. In 1776, 400 Guilford men joined the Rowan County militia in a campaign against the Cherokees on the Tennessee River in western North Carolina. Incited by British agents, who tried to coordinate an Indian attack on frontier settlements with a coastal raid on Charleston, the Cherokees suffered bitterly after the raiders burned their towns and looted their crops. The militia returned home in triumph.³⁶

Just how compulsory military service affected specific individuals or families along the Haw River cannot be determined from the spotty documentation left behind. Three of William Mortimore's neighbors may have signed the 1768 Regulator petition seeking redress; at least five disavowed the Regulators but sought pardons for participants. Whether any fought in the Battle of Alamance is unknown. Revolutionary War service records in the National Archives identify several Continental soldiers with a Mortimer or Mortimore surname, including a drummer from Maryland and four privates, although none was from North Carolina. Sixteen of Mortimore's neighbors appear in Guilford militia lists, and at least three of those were drafted into Continental service.³⁷

At the Battle of Guilford Courthouse, just ten miles southeast of the Mortimore land, the Scots-Irish were “most prominent,” but how well they fought is questionable. Colonel Martin, the county commander, reported that after receiving General Greene’s order to muster he “could only raise about 200 to go with me to camp and they, hearing that the British were marching towards us in Guilford, it struck such a terror on them that some of that number deserted...” Most of the rest apparently fled along with the 561 North Carolina militia reported missing after the battle. Those Guilford men who remained were “so disheartened,” Martin said, that he “could not bring any to join ... [Greene’s force] again.”³⁸

The Guilford Courthouse engagement directly affected at least one Haw River family. Peter King lived six miles closer to the battleground than his Mortimore neighbor. His wife heard the sound of the battle, but her husband evidently had another militia assignment and did not join in the fight. His brother did, however, and survived, only to die of fever afterward. Peter was luckier. After his first tour of duty he stayed home and hired a substitute.³⁹

The sparse documentation may be indicative, but it is not decisive evidence that Mortimore and most of his neighbors avoided military duty. Militia rosters are notoriously incomplete. Without better records we may never know the whole truth about the Haw River land-owners, but neither should we ignore the probabilities. The Regulator legacy demonstrated their disdain for the arrogant English, but they also resented intrusive Patriot legislation. The loyalty oath offended the religious and political sensibilities of Quakers, Germans, and Scots-Irish alike. Many refused to take the oath despite the dire consequences, even though the General Assembly allowed “Quakers, Moravians, Menomists & Dunkards” to “affirm” their loyalty rather than swear on oath. The Assembly also voided any effort to appropriate land legally acquired by conscientious objectors and exempted them from militia service. Without state pressure to participate in a violent and uncertain conflict, religious dissidents likely kept to themselves. Historians Escott and Crow have drawn the same conclusion: that back country settlers simply wanted to be left alone.⁴⁰

The Carolina Exodus

For twenty years after the war the Mortimores remained in Guilford County, participating in community life alongside their neighbors but struggling to earn a living from the soil. The county's principal crops were flax, indigo, hemp, and a little wheat, corn, and dark-leaf tobacco. Compared to farming in Europe and even to coastal settlements in the Northeast, North Carolina farming in the Colonial and Early National periods was backward and inefficient. Piedmont farmers after the Revolution were still using implements common in Roman times. Much of the heavy work of clearing and cultivating had to be done by hand. Even if they had wanted slaves, most upland farmers could not afford them. They worked their wives and children instead. William Mortimore had at least two sons (Robert and David) and a daughter (Sally) who labored in the fields alongside their parents. With plenty of land but not enough knowledge or technology or capital to work it properly, Mortimore and his neighbors lived marginally, with low crop production and rapid soil exhaustion. In historian Cornelius Cathey's words, by the 1780s "the practice of abandoning worn-out fields to grow up in bramble and briers had already marred the landscape."⁴¹

Commercial agriculture in the northern Piedmont had to await better transportation, better technology, and more profitable crops. By 1850 cotton had risen to commercial importance alongside corn and wheat, but tobacco lagged behind. North Carolina's modern tobacco industry is essentially a product of bright-leaf experimentation and cultivation, technological innovation, and mass marketing to create popular demand for cigarettes after the Civil War.⁴²

In early Guilford there were other ways besides farming to earn a living. Gunmaking was an important regional enterprise. Gunsmiths made their own barrels and locks from iron and copper ores mined locally. They crafted stocks from local hardwoods. Despite their religious opposition to war, several Quaker families made and sold rifles to both sides during the revolutionary era. Later, Guilford gunmakers were one of the first to add percussion locks to their weapons, and the "Guilford rifle" became well known in the South.⁴³

Other handcrafts developed in the upland country during the Revolutionary era. A cottage industry in leather goods grew from the abundance of fur-bearing animals in the rivers and canebrakes of the central plateau. Carolina shoemakers were exempt from military duty, and Guilford's leather attracted troops on both sides. Perhaps William Mortimore was as skilled in making harnesses and shoes in North Carolina as his great-great-great grandson, Edward Mortimore, in Oregon much later. They may also have been potters, working with the fine Piedmont clays so abundant in the area. An Oklahoma branch of the family cherish two clay pots reputed to have been made by one of the Mortimores before they moved north.⁴⁴

However the Mortimore family earned a living, the land they owned was their most important economic asset. Land prices varied widely from county to county, but good land was attractive to speculators with both the capital to invest and the patience to wait for the inevitable boom. Early in 1761, William Byrd III, son of a prominent Virginia planter, offered 33,000 acres of Piedmont land on the Dan River to a potential buyer for 500 guineas (about \$80,000 today). Six months later he sold it to another party for 1,000 guineas, and in 1772 the asking price was 2,800 guineas. The Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1784 with the Iroquois and other tribes ceded 13 million acres of virgin land in western Pennsylvania. State land officers promptly sold it in huge tracts for 6 to 17 cents per acre. Ten years later, with the rush of settlers moving west, prices for the same land had risen by up to 800 percent. As a French observer wrote in 1794, European investors "cannot have a more rapid means of increasing their fortunes," provided they worked "under the direction of men of judgment and integrity."⁴⁵

Even depleted soils could be packaged in attractive offers. Along the lower Potomac in Virginia, farmland in 1800 sold for \$18 to \$20 per acre on nine-year terms. Between 1806 and 1817, Richmond agents advertized land at prices varying from \$3.02 to \$194 per acre. Most were older plantations whose owners had taken up new lands as the cotton and tobacco belts spread westward. Land in western North Carolina was worth less but widely available. A 1796 Connecticut agency listed 180,000 acres in Rutherford County, 66,000 acres in Surry, and

15,000 acres in Stokes, the latter county adjacent to Guilford. In 1805 two agents in Petersburg, Virginia, offered "Choice lands" in Rockingham County, created from the northern half of Guilford in 1785. Their clients were selling 12,832 acres divided into eight parcels. "The four largest lots are of excellent quality, each containing a considerable proportion of the richest low grounds, which produce tobacco of the very best quality." Promotion was as important then as today. "As there are seldom such lands for sale, they must be an object to those who want to purchase such as will produce fine tobacco, hemp and small grain." Terms were not announced, but one-third of the price "must be paid in ready money, one third in twelve months, and the other third in two years, the purchaser giving bond with unexceptional security bearing interest from the date if not punctually paid."⁴⁶

Land was both a pulling and a pushing factor on the Appalachian plateau. Soil depletion pushed hundreds of Piedmont farmers southwest or northwest to new lands taken from native Americans. In the post-Revolutionary period, state claims to trans-Appalachian lands passed to the United States, opening millions of acres to settlement. Federal land laws passed after 1785 at first favored speculators, who purchased large tracts and repackaged them in smaller parcels for sale to actual settlers. After the War of 1812 the U.S. Land Bureau made direct land sales more competitive, offering 160-acre tracts in Missouri, Indiana, Alabama, Arkansas, Michigan, and Illinois for \$40 to \$75 each.⁴⁷

Buyers now had a wide variety of options, but as the choices increased so did the promotional hype from real estate agents. A typical ad from Pennsylvania in 1796 lured prospects by claiming that the "large tract" they offered had soil, timber, water, and "every thing requisite" for success. The land already had attracted thirty New England families, and a "number of these have become forhanded, wealthy farmers." Special offers were available for "young men to go to work on the land immediately." Each could "have a Farm, and take his labor for payment, in part, or, for the whole."⁴⁸

For Piedmont farmers with reservations about slavery, the Northwest Ordinance in 1787 added a political choice. It established a process by which new territories became states, and it prohibited slavery

in territories north of the Ohio River. That choice grew in importance after 1800 as southern cotton production accelerated to keep pace with the growth of industry both in the North and abroad. Cotton proved its economic worth to a planter class, who turned from defense to offense in promoting its culture and its “peculiar” institution. Though the Piedmont counties had few slaves, nonslaveowning farmers had to choose between proslave or antislave sympathies. Many supported slavery because they felt superior to blacks. They also grew dependent on the powerful planter-mercantile elite who controlled the local government, the banks, and the transport systems. Opponents of slavery were increasingly marginalized and intimidated as “King Cotton” marched westward. Long before the Missouri Compromise in 1821 divided the nation into slave and free soil, many antislave advocates had been driven out of the old South by an increasingly aggressive proslavery culture. Farmers on marginal lands who remained in the Piedmont and trans-Appalachian South continued to decline in economic and social status. By the mid-19th century they were pejoratively known as the “cracker” class.

The Carolina exodus had religious as well as economic implications. For more than two centuries, Quakers had been welcomed in the South, but as slavery spread so did the reluctance of Friends to support it. Although some Quakers owned slaves as late as the Revolutionary War, their leaders grew bolder in opposition. In 1772 the Virginia Yearly Meeting “denounced” buying or selling slaves, and a year later the North Carolina Friends followed suit. Protests and petitions encouraging manumission over the next twenty-five years led to a backlash among proslavery advocates and their political allies. The North Carolina legislature passed a law in 1777 prohibiting the setting free of any “negro or mulatto slave ... on any pretence whatsoever” except for “meritorious services” and with consent of the county court. As resistance hardened the Quakers feared reprisals and sought refuge in nonslave territories. One incident in 1803 seems indicative of the times. Zachary Dix, a Quaker minister from North Carolina, stood up at a South Carolina meeting and warned of a “bloody war on account of slavery in the lives of the children then living.” A “panic” ensued, and

in a short period at huge discounts “all had sold and gone to the Miami Country, Ohio.” Between 1800 and 1860, an estimated 6,000 Quakers from Virginia, the two Carolinas, and Georgia crossed the Ohio River to free soil.⁴⁹

Were the Mortimores among them? We still can’t say yet whether they were Quaker or Presbyterian, or Methodist, but we know that the heirs of William Mortimore left North Carolina and headed north during and after the War of 1812. William and his wife remained behind, buried under Carolina soil. They died about the same time, probably late in 1808 or 1809, after dividing the Guilford farmland among their three children. On the same day in June 1808 William had deeded 203 acres to each of his two sons for £50 per parcel, the equivalent of \$1.12 per acre—a low figure compared to other private land sales in the vicinity. In the same year he deeded for £5 the remaining 120 acres to his daughter Sally.⁵⁰

For at least fifty years the Mortimores lived in the North Carolina Piedmont. They arrived in colonial times, when central Carolina was still a remote frontier at the western edge of Euro-American civilization. Beyond the mountains was virgin land, officially an Indian reserve protected by the British Proclamation Line of 1763. In practice the line was repeatedly broken by fur traders and land scouts who penetrated the interior almost at will. After the Revolution, speculators moved quickly to claim the best lands, push back the natives, and sell their holdings to newcomers looking for better soil than they had left behind. By the turn of the 19th century, as the frontier expanded toward the Mississippi, politics and religion added new dimensions to the western landscape. Whether their primary motivation was the search for better land or the anxiety over slavery, by 1820 the heirs of William Mortimore had left Carolina behind. New frontiers lay ahead in the Northwest.

The Limbaugh Line: Origins of a Western Branch

From Lymbach to Limbaugh

The rise of one recent Limbaugh to celebrity status has greatly altered public perception of the name. Once obscure, the name is now widely recognized and even correctly pronounced. Today googling the surname returns 5.4 million hits, compared to 277 million for the name “Jones.” Even if we discount online redundancies or fallout from the “Rush” phenomenon, that still leaves a lot of other Limbaughs in cyberspace—too many, indeed, to write about.

This chapter is limited to one branch of the line that began in Germany with the immigrant ancestor, Georg Friederich Lymbach. Georg or Jörg are Latinized spellings of George. Religious practice heavily influenced naming customs in 18th-century Germany. A baptized child’s first name usually identified not the given name but the family’s favorite saint. Instead of George, our Limbaugh ancestor was known and called only by his middle name (*rufname*), the spelling of which was soon Anglicized to Frederick. His last name also went through several modifications, probably at the hands of Scots-Irish county officials who often dispensed with diacritical markings and changed the hard-sounding suffix “bach” to “baugh.” Until Frederick became an established Pennsylvania resident, spellings of his surname vary widely

in early documents. By the 1770s Limbach was the standard spelling, but some confusion has arisen because of the close proximity of Moravian immigrants named Leinbach with similar given names. Not until Frederick and his family settled in North Carolina did he begin to use the Anglicized current spelling.¹

The German Roots

The recorded Germanic roots of the Limbach family date at least to the 16th century, and may be much older. In early German principalities the name was rather common. In 1971 Noble Limbaugh found eleven villages named “Limbach” spread across modern Germany. More recently, Reinhard Hofer, a German researcher, located early Limbach families in various parts of what is now southern Germany. Before the Thirty Years’ War there were Limbachs in Lower Franconia (Bavaria) at Nordheim am Main (1550), Altbessingen (1580), Schweinfurt (1545), Bergrheinfeld (1610), and Zeuzleben (1620). After the war Limbachs lived in the same area around Bergtheim (1650), Hausen (1650), Werneck (1650), Eltville (1680), and Laudenbach (1730). Hofer found one immigrant in the Kraichgau region of Baden-Württemberg, a few miles southwest of Hüffenhardt in the Palatinate. Johann Georg Limbach lived in Ittlingen in 1751, and apparently emigrated from that town soon afterward. Where he went is not yet known. In the Saarland region, on the border with France, Hofer found a Limbach line that dates to the early 17th century. Ulrich Limbach lived in Niederbexbach as early as 1605; a Johann Limbach was a judge there in 1718. Many Saarlanders emigrated to the United States in the 18th century.²

Whether any of these German Limbachs can be linked to Frederick in Pennsylvania is still unclear. Frederick’s origins were in Hüffenhardt, where he was born as Georg Friederich Lymbach on 14 October 1734. Since the sound of an umlauted “y” is close to the English “i” as in “ill,” “Limbach” was the preferred American spelling until the late 18th century. Microfilmed Lutheran church records now in the Stuttgart archives list the marriage of Frederick’s grandfather, Michael Lymbach (1680–abt.1730), to Anna Catharina Wagner, in Hüffenhardt on 24 August 1700. Michael was from Reinsberg, a village near Schwäbisch Hall

in what was then the Duchy of Württemberg. His family can be traced in Reinsberg church records to the early 17th century. Over a twenty-two-year period, Michael and Catharina had twelve children. Only six survived to adulthood.³

The documentary evidence in these parish records suggests that the Lymbachs were typical lower middle class residents during a period of rising taxes, declining economic opportunities, and sectarian religious disputes. Baden and Württemberg in the 17th and 18th centuries were a patchwork of small, independent principalities caught between powerful rivals to the east, west, and north. During the Thirty Years' War (1618–48) the armies of France, Austria, Sweden, and their allies fought and marched back and forth with devastating consequences to villages, crops, and peasants. Estimates of population loss during the war vary from 35 percent to 75 percent. Given even the smaller number lost or displaced, Baden and Württemberg took a long time to recover.⁴

Frederick's father, unlike most of his contemporaries, had only one given name.⁵ Johannes most likely began his working life like his father Michael, learning to weave linen and rope for a local merchant who provided the raw material and paid him by the piece. Johannes was twenty-five when he married Maria Margaretha Listerer on 24 February 1734. A church scribe dutifully recorded the birth of Frederick, evidently their first and only son, on 10 October of the same year, "33 weeks after union in marriage." Premarital sexual relations were not unusual in an age when natural fecundity was both preached and practiced. One study of a Bavarian village shows that in the first half of the 18th century, over 11 percent of all brides were pregnant when married. Even illegitimate children, though officially stigmatized, were socially accepted in many small communities. Two daughters were also born to Maria and Johannes, but both died in infancy.⁶

Firstcomers to America

At age nineteen Frederick left Hüffenhardt with his parents during the height of pre-Revolutionary Germanic emigration to America. Thousands from the southwestern German principalities annually left the homeland in the first quarter of the 18th century. Most were young

Datum	Infantes.	Parentes.	Testes.
1734. 22. 10. 1734.	37. Johann Philipp. p. 774. Nr. 8.	Johann Peterius Sg. mann gewistter resulten mülter. ganz allier, und Anna Maria former Kreuzst. off. Köpfl.	1) Johann Peterius Sg. 2) Johann Georg Mülter 3) Johann Georg Mülter 4) Johann Georg Mülter
1734. 11. 10. 1734.	38. Georg Friedrich.	Johann Friedrich Sg. Kreuzst. off. Köpfl. und Bürger zu Mollan- berg und Maria bar. Kreuzst. off. Köpfl. p. 584. Nr. 10.	1) Georg Friedrich Sg. 2) Johann Friedrich Sg. 3) Johann Friedrich Sg. 4) Johann Friedrich Sg.
1734. 14. 10. 1734.	39. Georg Friedrich.	Johannes Lymbach Sg. weber und Bürger zu Hüffenhardt und Maria Mar- garetha former off. Köpfl. Kreuzst. off. Köpfl. nach der Copulation an- gehet Köpfl. p. 774. Nr. 8.	1) Andreas Langen Sg. 2) Johann Georg Mülter 3) Johann Georg Mülter 4) Johann Georg Mülter

Figure 2 Georg Friedrich Birth Record

A page from the record books of the Evangelical Church of Hüffenhardt (Mosbach, Baden) Germany, confirming the birth of Georg Friedrich Lymbach. The Latin headings at the top show columns for the date, infant's name, the name of the parents, and names of witnesses who testified that the baby was legitimate—although born only 33 weeks after the wedding. In a mixture of Latin and German script, the bottom row shows baby #39 born on 14 October 1734 to Johannes Lymbach, a linen weaver and resident of Hüffenhardt, and Maria Margarita, his legitimate wife. An earlier document in the same Kirchenbuch records the marriage of Johannes and Maria on 24 February of the same year. From Landeskirchliches Archiv Karlsruhe, Kirchenbücher Hüffendhardt, Bestand 155, Filme F 662.

married men with their families seeking better opportunities where land was cheap and labor scarce. Some older family heads indentured their teenage sons to help pay the family's passage to Philadelphia, the major port of entry in this period for immigrants arriving from the Rhineland via Rotterdam. Whether Frederick was indentured is

unknown but likely, given his youth, his bachelor status, and his subsequent history after arriving in Philadelphia on the immigrant ship *Brothers* on 26 September 1753.⁷

For five years after disembarking and taking the oath of allegiance to the British Crown, Frederick and his father disappear into the Pennsylvania hinterlands, leaving no documentary trace. Evidently this was a period of servitude during which Frederick worked off his debt. In 1758 the young man from Hüffenhardt, now with a different spelling of his surname, began a new chapter of his life near Easton on the Delaware River in what was then Upper Milford Township of Northampton County, Pennsylvania. He married Anna Catharina Ritter, daughter of Paul Ritter, a large landowner with property in several townships. Ritter's arrival in the 1730s coincided with the first large German immigrant land rush up the Perkiomen Valley north of Philadelphia. By 1755 the route they followed was improved with the construction of the "King's Highway," a road extending northwesterly through present Lehigh County, about fifty miles northeast of Philadelphia. Most of this land is heavily timbered on rolling hills and shallow valleys, with water plentiful along Perkiomen and Hosensack Creeks and their tributaries. Actual farm acreage was small because it took so much work to clear land prior to cultivation. Clearing was a cooperative effort by neighbors and their families coming together in "log-rolling bees" with saws, axes, and grubbing hoes to chop and stack brush, dig up roots, and cut down and pile up previously girdled trees that were dried out and ready for burning.⁸

The younger Limbach may have been working for Paul Ritter clearing land at the time of his marriage. Over the next few years he may also have served as an itinerant schoolteacher to German farm children, since he was able to read and write well in his native language. These early Pennsylvania schools were located in churches, with schoolhouses sometimes preceding the establishment of a church. The structures served both functions in this early period. Until the third decade of the 19th century, parish school instruction was entirely in German. However, a few bilingual charity schools were established in the 1750s. Designed to train German youth in the English language and

the British political and legal system, they were encouraged by colonial leaders with the help of Lutheran and Reformed pastors, all worried by the increasing French influence during the French and Indian War. Between 1755 and 1764, 500 or more German youth received bilingual education from German schoolteachers at these schools. Had he sufficient English skills to train others, Limbach might well have taught in one of the institutions located near him at Easton, New Hanover, and Northampton. He must have also begun to learn something about local politics and law in this period, although until the late 1770s his primary occupation was farming. As early as 1768 he is listed as a witness in a Lower Milford land transaction, indicating his connection—however peripheral—to legal matters.⁹

German Protestants in America

Frederick Limbach's personal religious affiliations and practices are not entirely clear. Unquestionably he was Protestant like most 18th-century Palatine immigrants, but what particular sect is uncertain. Before the Evangelical Union in 1817, Lutheran and Calvinist doctrinal squabbles divided southwest Germany, and those rivalries continued as immigrants crossed the Atlantic. Frederick was married in Augustus Lutheran Church in Trappe, Montgomery County, and his first child was baptized in St. Paul's Lutheran Church at Red Hill, a mile southeast of Pennsburg in the same county, but these could be indications of his wife's preferences rather than his own. His father-in-law was a charter member of the Upper Milford Lutheran Church near Dillingersville, where Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, known as the "father of American Lutheranism," served in the late 1740s.

However, the scarcity of church facilities forced these early German settlers to share both pastors and buildings, even to the point of unifying in some cases, as the Grossenhoppen congregations did after the church was founded in 1732, very near Limbach's first Pennsylvania land holdings.¹⁰ The doctrinal differences in America seemed less important than the pragmatic necessity of sharing facilities. Lutherans retained more "high church" rituals than Reformers and tried harder to maintain doctrinal unity, while Reformers, with their Calvinist heri-

tage, emphasized individual worship and Bible reading at home. As two church elders admitted in 1762, perhaps with tongue in cheek, one variation they could cite was in the Lord's Prayer, where the Lutherans said "Vater Unser" while the Reformed said "Unser Vater." Another was in the way they went about their business: "The Reformed first attend to duty, and then indulge in wine, whilst the Lutherans first sip their wine and then attend to duty."¹¹

Whatever his membership, in practice Limbach apparently was not very devout. His name does not appear in Pennsylvania church attendance or membership rosters—presumptive evidence that he was not a member of one of the pious sects that also inhabited the area. The fact that his first two children were baptized at St. Paul's Lutheran Church at Red Hill is inconclusive, since church records show that many pastors baptized nonmembers of their parish, especially in union churches but also in towns and settlements without union arrangement.¹²

Limbach Lands in Pennsylvania

A better indicator of Frederick Limbach's early life and career in Pennsylvania can be found in land and tax records. As early as 1762 he appears in the Upper Milford tax lists. Upper Milford Township, created in Bucks County in 1739 and transferred to newly created Northampton County in 1752, changed affiliations again in 1812, when Lehigh County was organized. Forty years later it was divided in half, the northwestern section retaining the name Upper Milford, and the southeastern section becoming Lower Milford. During the time of Limbach's residence in Pennsylvania, however, Upper Milford was a single rectangular township approximately 6 miles by 5 ½ miles within the boundaries of Northampton, with the county seat at Easton at the state's eastern boundary on the Delaware River.

As Northampton tax records indicate, Limbach owned and farmed property long before he acquired land from his father-in-law. In 1763 he was assessed £14, a sizeable sum, for the "land he lives on," 150 deeded acres, plus another 50 undeeded acres elsewhere. Whether these deeds were in his own name is still unknown, for no recorded deeds have turned up with his name on them before 1770, and Limbach did not

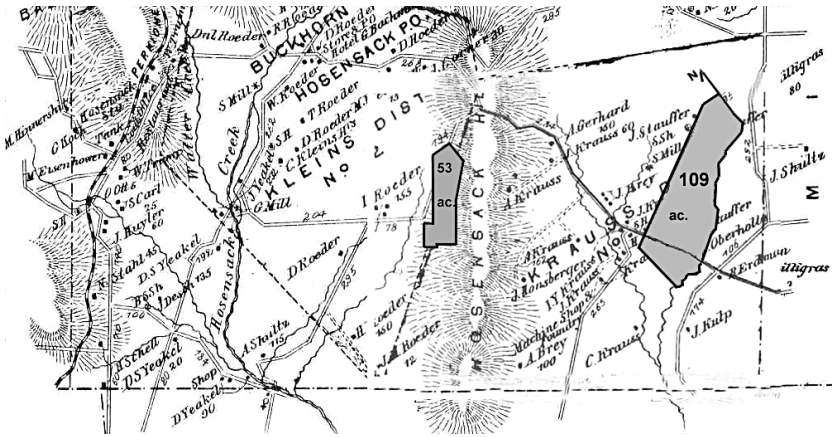


Figure 3 Limbach Lands in Pennsylvania

During the 30 years he lived in Pennsylvania, Frederick Limbach acquired several tracts of semi-improved land. This map shows two of these parcels in what was then Upper Milford, a six-mile-square township in Northampton County southeast of Easton, the county seat. After the Revolution he was buried in debt. In 1787 he departed for the Carolina Piedmont, leaving behind everything but a few chattels in the hands of creditors. Adapted from F. A. Davis, *New Illustrated Atlas of Lehigh County, Pennsylvania*, 1876.

become a naturalized subject of Great Britain until 1767. The county assessment for that year provides more detail about Limbach and his property, showing that he owned 100 acres of cleared land and another 100 of woodland. He paid about £8 in taxes in 1767, less than previously, but whether this represents deterioration in his economic status or a lower tax rate is not clear. The 1767 tax record also includes personal property assessments on three horses and mares, five horned cattle, and three sheep. He continues to appear in the tax rolls at least up to the late 1780s, with assessments varying from £10 to £15 on 200 acres and about the same amount of livestock. A column to record “bound servants, Negroes and Mullettos” remains blank through these years, indicating that Limbach was not a slaveowner.

Presumably, the cleared land he lived on was part of the 104 acres deeded to him by his father-in-law in 1770, part of a tract called the “Old Right,” which Ritter had acquired from John Stouffer, a neighboring landowner, a decade earlier.¹³ The Old Right tract had a long history of land speculation that began with William Penn’s 17th-century

grant of 2,400 acres of undeveloped woodlands fifty miles northeast of Philadelphia to Colonel William Markham, presumably as a reward for military service. The land eventually passed to Markham's heirs, who held it until 1729, when a Philadelphia "gentleman," James Steel, purchased nearly half of the original grant. When German immigrants began pushing up the Perkiomen Valley, Steel had a 276-acre portion surveyed, which he sold in 1747 to a speculator who held it long enough for values to rise, then split the tract in two and sold both parts to other speculators. After passing through several other hands, two of these segments were purchased by Paul Ritter in 1760, the largest a 104-acre tract near what is now Krassdale in Lower Milford Township (then Kraussdale in Upper Milford). This was the acreage Ritter sold a decade later to his son-in-law, Frederick Limbach. An adjacent tract of approximately 179 acres came into the possession of the Reverend George Kriebel, a pious Schwenckfelder soon to be involved in the Test Oath controversy with his neighbor Frederick Limbach as principal antagonist.¹⁴

German Immigrants and Revolutionary Politics

Limbach's political career in Pennsylvania is still a matter of considerable controversy, as Francis Fox has recently explored in a challenging study of Northampton County during the colonial and revolutionary periods.¹⁵ A strong defender of minority rights, Fox describes Limbach as a "crony" of John Wentzel, a tyrannical local official whose main objective during the Revolution evidently was to enhance his own personal fortune at the expense of vulnerable neighbors. To understand this viewpoint requires some understanding of regional political culture, as well as some perspective on the status of religious minorities and the divisions among and between Patriot and Loyalist factions during the Revolutionary era.

Daniel Boorstin's multivolume series *The Americans* provides a good overview of colonial culture in William Penn's "noble experiment." As one of the strategic middle colonies, Pennsylvania was intensely commercial from its very founding, a major point of interchange between colonial products flowing both north and south along the

navigable Delaware and Susquehanna Rivers. Its central location and navigable streams also made it accessible to two major Indian populations, the Iroquois Nation, key allies of the British in its colonial wars with France, and the Algonquin tribes of the upper Great Lakes, chief enemies of the Iroquois and key allies of the French before 1763. As a proprietary colony, Pennsylvania was also largely independent of British government control, subject only to the policies and practices of its founder. As we remember from our third-grade history books, Penn's Quaker father had loaned money to Charles II during the Restoration and in 1660 was rewarded with a generous land grant in America. Following his creative Quaker "inner light," William Penn turned the colony into a commercial and religious haven for small farmers and merchants, Christian Indians, and mainstream churches as well as Quakers, Moravians, Mennonites, Schwenckfelders, Amish, and other religious minorities escaping persecution both in other colonies and abroad. By the mid 18th century, Pennsylvania was already exhibiting qualities that later characterized the antebellum North: capitalism, pluralism, diversity, individualism, and pragmatic tolerance of different points of view. The flood of German immigrants in the first half of the 18th century caused some backlash among older English settlers, but in 1742 the colonial assembly bowed to the inevitable and passed a law allowing all who took an oath of loyalty to king and commonwealth to become naturalized residents and property owners. At the time some Quakers and other conscience-stricken religious minorities, who thought oath-taking of any sort violated one of the Ten Commandments, resisted. They were allowed to "affirm" rather than "swear" their allegiance.¹⁶

The local political climate changed dramatically in the revolutionary foment leading to war, as tolerant Quaker leadership gave way to intolerant Patriots eager to avenge real or perceived British grievances. British attempts to restore imperial control after the Boston Tea Party in 1775 only escalated the colonial crisis, and Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* accelerated the pace toward independence. When delegates from most colonies met in Philadelphia as the First Continental Congress to discuss the imperial crisis, local radicals tossed out Pennsylvania's old

government and pressed the delegates for a declaration of independence. In June 1776, a month before Jefferson's famous document was ratified, radicals in the Pennsylvania Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution establishing a colonial militia of 4,500 men in six battalions, and authorizing a Provisional Convention to draft a new state constitution. The radical new organic law abolished the governorship, placed supreme power in a popularly elected unicameral Assembly, did away with many old proprietary privileges, and greatly expanded the political franchise. Since German immigrants by the mid-1770s made up half the population, the new constitution in effect turned control of the Commonwealth over to the burgeoning Scots-Irish and German counties north and west of Philadelphia.¹⁷

The Revolution in Northampton County

The new militia law had a direct impact on Frederick Limbach's life in Northampton County. On 30 May 1776, just a few days before the bill passed, Limbach entered local politics. He was elected to the General Committee of Upper Milford, a revolutionary body organized to ensure Patriot control of local affairs. The job not only kept him out of active military service but also gave him increased political power. Meeting at Easton periodically, the committee used its authority to requisition property for military purposes, raise taxes for bounties, decide who was eligible for military service and the terms of their enlistment, and impose fines for noncooperation. That summer, instead of marching off with other Pennsylvania volunteers to help General Washington defend Long Island, Limbach tended to more mundane local matters, either on his farm or in Easton on committee business.¹⁸

His friends and neighbors who participated in the Battle of Long Island were not so lucky, for the casualty rate was high, and by the time it was over "most of ... [Northampton's militia] men [were] either dead or wounded," according to a local chronicler.¹⁹ The toll sobered many tentative patriots, who began agitating for laws to keep their boys at home, especially after Lord Howe, the British commander, moved his troops south toward Philadelphia in the fall of 1776, with Washington's ragged remnants cautiously following in pursuit. Late in Decem-

ber, with most of Howe's men camped along a broad front centered at Trenton, New Jersey, the American commander issued a plea from his headquarters in Bucks County for Northampton militiamen to join the Continental army in defending Philadelphia from British occupation. Many did turn out, despite the Easton committee's earlier resolution ordering the county militia not to cross into New Jersey. When Washington famously "crossed the Delaware" to launch a surprise attack on Howe's Hessian troops celebrating Christmas at Trenton, Northampton troops joined in the fight and rejoiced with the Continental forces in their first victory of the war. A few days later, instead of marching to winter quarters at Morristown after the Patriot army slipped away from a counterattack at Princeton, the Northampton regiments returned to their farms and families.²⁰

As a local political leader, Frederick Limbach kept his own fences mended while others did the fighting. That fall he won reelection to the Northampton General Committee, and in the spring of 1777 he joined a local military unit after the radical Assembly in Philadelphia passed a new Militia Act. The law strengthened the power of county militia leaders over local affairs, including the enforcement of military quotas, the imposition of taxes and fines, and the confiscation of property. Under Lieutenant John Wetzel, an assemblyman who took charge of Northampton's military affairs under the new legislation, Limbach received a commission as major in the Second Battalion of the reorganized County Militia. In this staff position, far from the front lines, he served as one of five sublieutenants empowered to carry out Wetzel's orders.²¹

Northampton County was the scene of much military activity during the winter and spring of 1777. With Washington's meager forces entrenched at Morristown, New Jersey, twenty-five miles west of Manhattan Island, and with British troops occupying the coastal areas and threatening to sail up the Delaware, the only good inland route connecting New York and Philadelphia was the old King's Highway, which ran through Easton. Frederick Limbach's star rose rapidly in this period, an indication of both his personal ambitions as well as his excellent political and military connections. Within days after receiv-

ing his officer's commission, he was appointed justice of the peace for Upper Milford Township. Since Wetzel controlled the local patronage and may have been able to manipulate local elections as well, clearly Limbach was one of Wetzel's favorites.

This job gave Limbach new prestige—hereafter he was deferentially referred to as “Esquire”—but it also placed him in the unhappy role of magistrate and chief administrator of laws more characteristic of a police state than a democratic society. In Fox's words, the Militia Act of 1776 “opened the door for villainy” by authorizing militia leaders to confiscate and sell the property and chattels of all those who refused to serve or to hire a substitute when called to local militia duty. The effects of this draconian measure, justified as the only way to keep the militia at full strength, became even more oppressive after radicals in the new state Assembly passed a second Militia Act in June 1777. It required all male residents over eighteen years old to take an oath renouncing allegiance to King George and swearing allegiance to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Anyone who refused was branded as a traitor or “Loyalist.” They could not hold office, buy, or sell property, or travel beyond their local city or county jurisdiction. Anyone who did would be considered a spy and jailed without bail until he (or she) took the oath. As proof of compliance, every citizen had to carry a certificate signed by a magistrate and produce it if challenged. The paperwork kept scribes busy and clogged the courts. By the end of the war Northampton County officials alone had administered over 4,000 oaths. Justice Limbach signed dozens of certificates in Upper Milford after taking the oath himself on 28 June, three days before its public debut.²²

The ultimate in economic warfare came in the fall of 1777, after the British occupied Philadelphia. The frightened legislature, reassembling in Lancaster, passed a Bill of Attainder confiscating all real and personal property of anyone refusing to take the oath. Other former colonies passed similar bills, legalizing what became a massive attack on British sympathizers, real or alleged. By the end of the war nearly 100,000 of these unhappy loyalists, powerless and penniless, driven from their homes and livelihoods, escaped to Canada or other parts of the British Empire.²³

American history is replete with loyalty oaths and other symbolic gestures that cause great personal harm. Most arise during national emergencies, a reflection of popular fears codified into law by officials determined to root out real or perceived enemies of the state. Statesmen who lived through the Revolutionary crisis, and who saw firsthand the evils of mob rule, outlawed bills of attainder and other acts of vengeance in the Constitution of 1787, but peacetime guarantees have often eroded in times of crisis. Religious heretics in colonial New England, pro-French Republicans in the late 1790s, Copperheads during the Civil War, anarchists and other radicals during and after World War I, Japanese Americans during World War II, communists in the McCarthy era, flag burners and terrorists after 9/11—all have been targeted, but many innocents have been victimized by attempts to protect America's "internal security."

Using militia units and courts to enforce the laws in Northampton County, Wetzel and his fellow patriots aggressively pursued conscientious objectors who refused to bear arms or hire substitutes. Brought before local magistrates, they suffered heavily from fines, property confiscation, imprisonment, and banishment. Legal officers made periodic reports on the amounts collected, but all those involved in enforcement were paid out of revenue received, and since no audits were required, the system was subject to abuse.

How much abuse is impossible to determine. Francis Fox's recent monograph asserts that Wetzel and his men schemed "to get even and get rich" at the expense of "helpless" neighbors. How many victims, who supported and who opposed actions against them, how much was taken and where did it go, how does the Northampton experience compare with other regions—these kinds of questions are not addressed in *Sweet Land of Liberty*. Even Fox admits that Wetzel "managed to wriggle free of financial liability incurred during his term as county lieutenant." Late in the war he was investigated for allegedly pocketing money belonging to others, his books were examined, and he was sued, but apparently nothing came of these allegations.²⁴

The most damning evidence of venality shows that military and civil officials personally participating in auctions of confiscated proper-

ty, but the motives for such behavior are unclear. Frederick Limbach's actions, at least, seem more driven by ideology than avarice. After punishing a group of nonresistant Mennonites by ordering confiscation and banishment, for example, Wetzel, Limbach, and other officials bid on "bargains" for themselves while the defendants stood by in tears, watching their life's possessions picked over by their accusers. With seeming indifference, Limbach bought a dispossessed neighbor's "hand screw" at one auction, and purchased "half a bushel" of grain at another from a Mennonite whose property he had just ordered confiscated. He was but one of 350 bidders. Such purchases, while predatory, are more symbolic of power than of wealth.²⁵

There are grim moments in any war regardless of causes or participants. During the War of American Independence, atrocities stained the "internal revolution" as armed mobs vanquished real or imaginary enemies, stealing or destroying their possessions, burning their houses, occasionally driving them out with tar and feathers. Some innocents lost their lives, as in the Wyoming Massacre, or "Battle" as it is now called, when Loyalists and their Iroquois allies slaughtered hundreds of settlers and militia.²⁶ Its aftermath was just as bad, when a village filled with Christian Indians was destroyed with all inhabitants at the hands of avenging militia. Limbach took testimony from witnesses to the latter deed, and must have grimaced at accounts of women and children shot or knocked on the head in "slaughter houses" that were then set afire.²⁷ Given the sorry record of genocide and other horrors inflicted upon innocent victims of human fanaticism, past to present, Patriot actions against dissenters and nonresistors in Revolutionary Pennsylvania are understandable if not excusable.

Whatever their personal motives, Northampton militia leaders and the rank and file zealously enforced the law as they understood it. Though Patriots quickly grabbed the reins of power after the war began, for the first three years the outcome was far from certain. Many historians have described the American Revolution both as a civil war and as a war for independence, with Americans fighting each other as well as the British. As we are daily reminded by news from the Middle East, civil wars can be murderous affairs. Loyalists in Pennsylva-

nia were too weak to threaten Patriot forces after 1777, but those not sympathetic to the Patriot cause, regardless of their potential strength or their reasons for opposition, were considered enemies and treated accordingly.

Moravians with extensive land and chattels were especially hard hit. Settling along the Perkiomen at Oley and Skippack in what became Montgomery County after being driven out of Saxony in the early 1730s, they were welcomed at first, but that welcome faded after they began proselytizing other German sects. By the late 1740s some Lutheran and Reformed leaders, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg in particular, were warning parishioners to beware of Moravian “revivalists,” “false prophets,” and “fanatics.” Sectarian squabbles declined somewhat during the next decade, but the lingering resentment helps explain why some Moravian families left Pennsylvania for North Carolina in the mid 1760s, and why others were targeted during the Revolution.²⁸ Armed with punitive laws and the militia to back them up, Wetzel and Patriot leaders in neighboring counties constantly harassed Moravian communities with taxes, fines, property confiscations, imprisonment, and forced labor. Opposed to fighting but willing to pay taxes, their rights were severely restricted and they carried a heavy financial burden.²⁹

As Northampton County judge and administrator, as well as one of Wetzel’s favorites, Frederick Limbach rigorously applied the militia laws during the critical period from 1776 to 1778, when Patriot anxiety was at its height. Undaunted by his own lack of judicial training and experience, he boldly asserted the power of his office, even rejecting the advice and counsel of higher authority when he felt he was right on matters of law and principle. He was also courageous, accepting the responsibility of harshly judging his neighbors and fining or jailing those he decided had violated the law. The dynamics of his personality suggest an inflexible idealist, a patriot wedded to rigid principles and firm beliefs, a man unlikely to make friends readily or keep them for long.

One of his first major cases as justice of the peace involved his next-door neighbor, George Kriebel, an influential Schwenckfelder pastor,

teacher and farmer who had purchased land adjacent to Paul Ritter's property in 1765.³⁰ On 1 May 1777, a month before the Test Oath became law, some members of the Schwenckfelder church had issued a proclamation by which they declared their willingness to pay taxes but asserted that "for conscience' sake" it was "impossible for us to take up arms and kill our fellow men."³¹ To Patriots this was open defiance, and Wetzel's men rose to the challenge. They identified all those they claimed were eligible for military service, assigned them to militia units, and called them to arms. When Kriebel's son Abraham ignored the call, Justice Limbach issued a warrant for his arrest and imposed a fine of £1 12s. A constable brought the young man and his father before the judge on 18 July, with Wetzel acting as chief accuser and prosecutor. When the elder Kriebel complained that the boy was underage, the magistrate cited the new provisions, in effect since 1 July, barring the testimony of anyone not taking the oath. Wetzel thereupon demanded that the father immediately take the oath required by law or go to "goal." [sic] Kriebel's reply is an interesting equivocation, one not based on freedom of conscience, as he and his defenders claimed, but on the pragmatic realities of the moment. In the summer of 1777, with Washington trying to rally regional defenses as the British threatened Philadelphia, Kriebel hedged his bet, as he explained in his own handwritten statement to higher authorities protesting his arrest:

I have promised allegiance to him [George III] when I was naturalized and I am afraid I might be guilty of Perjury before God and in my Conscience, and more-over it is very uncertain upon which side the Victory will fall out therefore I can't do it [take the oath] for the Present Time.³²

Given Kriebel's refusal and Wetzel's "command," Justice Limbach signed an order for Kriebel's arrest, explaining to his neighbor—in words suggesting deference to higher authority rather than arrogance, as Fox implies—"well George you See I can't help it." The judge's handwritten instructions to the jailer in Easton, where Kriebel was confined, are couched in similar terms: "Safely keep the s^d george

Kriebel in your s^d Goal till he shall thence be delivered by due Course of our present Law.”³³

Fox cites the Kriebel case as an example of Wetzel’s “vendetta against nonresisters,”³⁴ with Justice Limbach a willing co-conspirator. But unlike the Moravians, the Schwenckfelder’s influence kept them from more serious harm at the hands of their protagonists. George Kriebel’s friends appealed to a member of the Assembly, who took his case to the Supreme Executive Council, the body that had replaced the governor under the new radical state constitution. While the council was mulling over the Kriebel matter, two militiamen stopped a Menno-nite, Henry Funk, who was riding home after visiting a nearby blacksmith shop. When Funk failed to produce his certificate he was hauled before Justice Limbach, who questioned him and then gave him a day to think about his circumstances.

When court reconvened on 9 August, Funk rejected the oath, citing his devotion to a “higher power,” whereupon the judge, relying on statements from the arresting officers that Funk was suspect because he “travells forwards & backwards” as a spy might, sent him to jail.³⁵ Almost the same day a petition drafted by friends of Funk and Kriebel protesting their incarceration reached the Executive Council in Philadelphia, adding urgency to their deliberations. Six days later that body sent an advisory to “Frederick Limbach Esq.” warning that he had misinterpreted the law, which authorized jail only for those resisters who left the jurisdiction of their town or county. Funk and Kriebel had not crossed jurisdictional lines when they were arrested and therefore should be freed.³⁶

How this case ultimately turned out is not clear from the fragmentary records left behind. Evidently the two prisoners were soon released, but the misfortunes of the Continental Army that summer raised the anxiety level in southeast Pennsylvania and intensified efforts by Wetzel and the Northampton Patriot faction to weed out all who refused to take the oath or support the military. With Washington in retreat after losing the Battle of Brandywine on 11 September, and with the British now occupying Philadelphia, Limbach issued new warrants against Kriebel and Funk. Late in February 1778, the judge re-

ceived a new warning, this time from A. Robeson, an attorney hired by the two defendants. It did not mince words. "If the State of their Cases has been truly related to me your Conduct must be very unjustifiable," Robeson wrote, "and they much injured by the proceedings already had against them." If the judge would "reconsider the Matter" and "step no further in their Business," the "affair for the present is done." If he would not, the attorney left no doubt that further action against him would follow.³⁷

The legal dueling went on for the next ten months against a backdrop of continued intimidation and prosecution of suspected Loyalists at the county level even after the British evacuated Philadelphia in June. A legal fragment in the Northampton County archives dated 30 July 1778, shows Justice Limbach collecting £40 from Henry Funk, one of the highest fines levied against nonresisters in the period. In the meantime, prominent religious leaders and their allies increased the pressure on commonwealth officials to stop the overzealous enforcement of the test oath. In the Saucon Valley, Mennonite farmers were spared heavy fines after John Ettwein, a Moravian bishop, traveled to Philadelphia to complain. He told officials that Limbach and fellow justice Jacob Morey, meeting at Allentown in September 1778, had issued a sweeping summons to the pious farmers to "take the oath or take the consequences." Ettwein thought this was just a business ploy to profit from fees levied on conscious objectors. The officials sent representatives to Allentown and advised the justices to "retract" the summons.³⁸

Following statewide elections in the summer that gave greater voice to moderate opinion, the Assembly passed legislation on 3 December that amended the punitive provisions of the militia laws but retained their restrictions on civil rights. After that, radical attacks generally declined on tax-paying Mennonites, Moravians, and other conscientious objectors, though for the next eight years they still could not vote, serve on juries, or hold office.³⁹ The battle between Henry Funk and his adversaries carried on at least until 1781, however, when Limbach and two other county officials filed slander charges against the embattled Mennonite. Unfortunately, no disposition of that case has been found.⁴⁰

Regardless of codes of honor or rules of law, reputations and careers are often the victims of guilt by association. In Northampton County during the Revolution, one might think that Frederick Limbach's association with vindictive radicals like John Wetzel would have jeopardized his political stature. But that does not appear to have been the case. With few interruptions, Limbach's dual status as militia officer and judge continued until at least 1781, long after Wetzel left office. Early in 1778, as Washington's army rallied to resist Howe's march on Philadelphia, Limbach's unit was called to Continental service under General John B. Lacey. Whether this put him in harm's way is not clear, but he collected two months' pay as a staff officer in the Continental army before he returned to militia duty. Presumably his militia service ended with the American victory at Yorktown, but his judgeship in Upper Milford continued almost until the day he left the state, with only a brief pause.

In the fall of 1782 he was elected, with 434 votes, as one of Northampton's six representatives to the Eighth General Assembly, but for unknown reasons he did not appear when the first session opened in Philadelphia on 30 October. The Assembly minute book a few days later mentions that "A letter from Frederick Limbach Esquire elected a member for Northampton county, was read, in excuse, for his non attendance," and on 11 November he was listed along with four other members as "delinquent." No other information has been located to explain his absence. Since the session that year was dominated by Republican moderates, perhaps he did not feel comfortable, since he had been closely associated with the Constitutionalist radicals when Wetzel ran Northampton politics. His seat presumably remained vacant until Frederick Antes replaced him in July 1784. A month later Limbach was reappointed to his old bench as justice of the peace for Upper Milford, and for a time later that same year he was also listed as a judge in the Court of Common Pleas, the appellate body for JP decisions as well as a trial court for serious cases.⁴¹

The duties of his multiple offices during the war kept him flooded with paperwork. A judge with good penmanship, he documented his work in laborious longhand, serving warrants and subpoenas, con-

Northampton County Js. in the State of Pennsylvania —
 Whereas Peter Brown of the sd County are intended with his family
 consisting of his wife and Three children of the female sex. to move from
 his present usual place and Residence. being in the Township of Upper Merion
 County above. To new Virginia. or perhaps to some parts of the State of
 North Carolina. and also in consequence thereof Desired me the Subscriber
 one of the Magistrate of sd County. living in the S. Township upper
 Merion above. to grant him a License. in respect of his behaviour and
 Character. therefore in compliance of the S^d desire and Request. and more
 in respect of the law of Justice. and righteousness. I certify that the S.
 Peter Brown. is a man of a civil. and honest Character. of a good
 name under his neighbors. paying Discharging his lawful Debts
 having taken on the right times to the Disposition of the law taken
 the Oath of Allegiance. shews his life and body for America Independence
 And. therefore he is admitted to pass with his family. towns and
 Effect. to the intended place. or places. without any hindrance Trouble
 or Molestation. as he behaves in become. and All officers Civil and
 Military or all other good Citizens. are hereby humbly and friendly
 beseeched and required. to help and grant him and his family all
 such assistance. as necessity and convenience will require —
 Given under my hand and Seal April 22.
 Anno Domini hundred and Eighty five being
 in the 9th year of American Independence —
 Friedrich Limbach. Jm

Figure 4 Travel Pass Signed by Frederick Limbach, 1785

Here, in his own hand, Frederick Limbach authorizes a travel pass for a local resident.
 Facsimile of original from the National Archives, RG 15, M804.

ducting trials, witnessing wills and other documents, and administering test oaths. As militia officer and sublieutenant he was responsible for ordering periodic muster calls, screening new militiamen, verifying the militia rolls, and receiving and reporting fines and other collections. He handled enormous amounts of money, but whether he skimmed some off for himself, as Fox alleges, or reported and turned in all the funds he collected, cannot be determined. For services rendered he was apparently well paid. In July 1778, for example, the paymaster handed him £250, but for what pay period or term of service is uncertain. On the other hand, as a sublieutenant Limbach, during the period 1780–81, turned over to Samuel Rhea, one of Wetzel's successors, a total of £8,983 8s 6d, but this was in Continental currency, paper money highly discounted because of inflation. By 1781 it was almost worthless and had ceased to circulate as a medium of exchange.⁴²

All this political and legal activity must have taken its toll on the Limbach farm and family, but to what extent is unknown. Limbach's 200 acres remained on the Upper Milford tax lists until at least through 1783 and probably until 1787, although the available documentary record is spotty. In 1782 he had begun to subdivide, perhaps in anticipation of selling small parcels after the war. By the time he assumed public office in 1776 his oldest living son, Frederick Jr., was fifteen and could take over much of the routine farm work. There is no indication that the boy was called to muster at age eighteen as required. With his father in charge of certifying muster rolls, it was easy either to hire a substitute or simply ignore the summons. Of the 98 officers and 1,727 men in Northampton militia units, only about 40 percent actually served. The rest hired substitutes, many of them Irish immigrants who welcomed the standard rate of £40 for a two-month enlistment.⁴³

Goodbye to Pennsylvania

Frederick Limbach's life and career in Pennsylvania exemplified the pitfalls of personal history during a crucial transitional period, when thirteen colonies struggled first to forge a new nation and then to keep it from melting away in political factionalism and economic chaos. Unlike many of his neighbors, he proved adaptable to fundamental

changes in family, religion, language, occupation, and culture. Yet those same years caught him up in revolutionary forces that first favored him but ultimately undermined his career, left him bankrupt, and finally forced him to abandon whatever hopes and dreams he may have had for success and status in postwar Pennsylvania. In 1787, the same year that delegates from Pennsylvania and other states met in Philadelphia to address the national political and economic crisis that threatened the new nation, Limbach and his family rode south toward new lands in North Carolina. The only account of his last days in Upper Milford leaves many unanswered questions. Written in 1884 by a regional historian, it is a pathetic reminder of the unpredictability of the human condition:

[Frederick Limbach] was a very active man, and in some respects a very extreme man for the cause of liberty during the times of the Revolutionary war. He administered his office until December, 1787, but, as he did not live very economically, became deeply in debt. He sold his real property on December 1, 1787, to Daniel Stauffer for eleven hundred and one pounds, and left the following night with wife and children for parts unknown, and forever. On the 12th of December, 1787, a neighbor came to the old log house in which Limbach resided, but found it empty, and the old-fashioned fat-lamp was still standing on the hearth, and still lighted. Such was the end of Esquire Limbach's course in Upper Milford.⁴⁴



From Pennsylvania to the South: The Limbaughs, 1787–1815

Though shrouded in myth and symbolism, the American westward movement is a familiar theme. Consciously or not, American life from childhood to old age is filled with the language of pioneering and progress. Even if the frontier has long disappeared, belief in the American Dream, whether expressed in the broken English of a new immigrant or the lazy drawl of a president from Texas, is quintessentially a restatement of our biblical faith in the value of hard work in a hostile but potentially beneficial environment. To explore the unknown, conquer the wilderness, push back the Indians, clear the forest, earn a livelihood, and remake the world—these could be either the wages of Original Sin or the dynamics of progress. In reality, the American dream proved just as elusive to pioneer farm families as it does in the postmodern middle-class urban struggle for success.

This chapter exemplifies the pioneer tradition by following one branch of the Limbaugh family from Pennsylvania to the Carolinas. An earlier chapter ended with Frederick Limbach and his family suddenly disappearing late in 1787 from their home in Northampton County. We know from land deeds that they had arrived in North Carolina at least by 1789, but by what route, and why did it take so long? For years Limbaugh genealogists searched for clues to fill in the blanks. The search was complicated by trying to trace a German name

that was both hard to pronounce in English and hard to spell by semi-literate census takers and tax collectors, most of whom were provincial Americans of English or Scots ancestry. Rather than repeat the numerous spelling errors found in the early documentary record, this chapter will use the modern spelling of the surname. Only recently has enough new evidence surfaced to connect the Limbaugh trek to other German-American post-Revolutionary migrations and develop a plausible family narrative.

The Trek to North Carolina, 1787–1790

As early as the 1740s Pennsylvania German and Scots-Irish families began heading south toward the “Mesopotamia of North Carolina,” as promoters called the woody hills and loamy bottomlands around Salisbury and Charlotte, between the Yadkin and Catawba Rivers. They followed a trade route Native Americans had used for hundreds of years. By the late 18th century it was known as the Great Wagon Road. The standard route from Pennsylvania passed through Lancaster County, crossed the Susquehanna and Potomac on ferries, and proceeded southwestward through Winchester and up the Shenandoah Valley. At the headwaters of the Staunton River, after crossing the Richmond Road that ran due west to Cumberland Gap, the wagon road dropped through the Blue Ridge and entered North Carolina. Travelers could then follow either the upper waters of the Yadkin to Salisbury, or the Dan River to Guilford and beyond.¹

Moravian Germans in the 1750s and '60s also used approximately the same route from Pennsylvania to reach Wachovia, their large colony on the east side of the Yadkin, but religious differences kept them apart from German Reformed and Lutheran migrants. To avoid heckling from townsmen and drunks in the more populated lower Shenandoah Valley, some travelers took an alternate route closer to the Alleghany Mountains.²

Travel from the Potomac to the Yadkin could take a few weeks, months, or even years, depending on individual or family circumstances. Typical “Pennsylvania Dutch” Conestoga wagons had a curve or bow in the middle to keep the load from shifting. Pulled by horses or

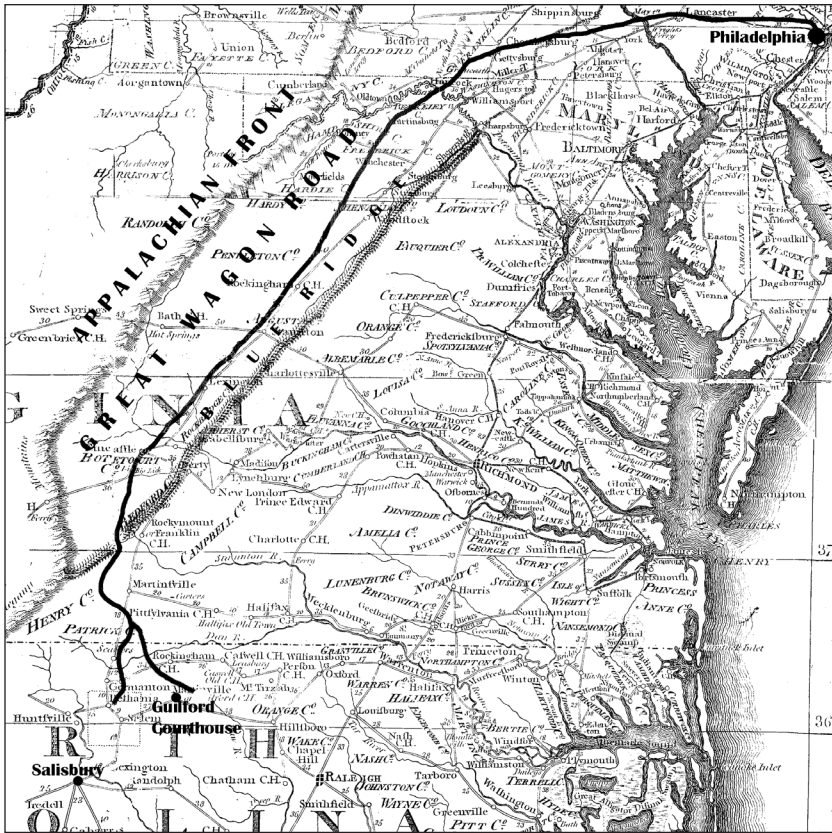


Figure 5 The Great Wagon Road

From the 1740s to the 1790s the Great Wagon road was a major travel route for thousands of immigrant farm families from Ireland, Great Britain, Germany, and other parts of Europe. Starting at Philadelphia and ending in the Carolina Piedmont, it followed a trade route Native Americans had used for hundreds of years. In 1787 the Limbaugh family took this route to escape their Pennsylvania creditors. Though hard evidence is lacking, the Mortimores may have used the same pathway three decades earlier to reach newly opened farmland along the Haw River.

oxen, they were filled with small tools and household goods, including a German Bible and a heavy cast iron plate to protect the fireplace. To ease the strain on draft animals, all but the old and infirm walked or rode saddle horses, driving their cattle and hogs as they traveled. Regardless of which alternative south-bound travelers chose, the two routes merged near the headwaters of the James and passed through Botetourt County.³

When he left Pennsylvania in December 1787, George Frederick Limbaugh Senior had already decided to follow the great migratory path southward. After nearly thirty years of marriage to Anna Catharina Ritter, the couple had at least six children of their own, but some may not have survived infancy—including their first-born Johannes, not found in the public record after 1759. His parents abandoned their large estate and took only what they could carry in a wagon or herd along the way. Three teenage sons walked or rode along on horseback, probably herding a cow or two, and a toddler rode in the wagon.

The documentary records do not reveal their names, but they most certainly were Peter, Christian, Henry, and Michael, ages seventeen, fifteen, fourteen, and four, respectively. One older child also left with them or perhaps preceded them by a few months to look for a good stopping place. Twenty-six-year-old George Frederick Limbaugh Junior had married Barbara Crader the year before they decided to leave the Keystone State. The couple had their first child, Catherine, in Virginia, providing the first good clue to solving the migratory mystery. She was probably born in Botetourt County, where the family stopped for at least a year on their way south. German and Scots-Irish immigrants had begun settling the narrow valleys west of the Blue Ridge in the 1730s at the invitation of Royal officials, who wanted a buffer against Indians and their French allies west of the Alleghanies. The Limbaughs were in Botetourt long enough to establish a residence and pay personal property taxes, but decided to keep moving, probably because of crowded conditions and high land prices. The next stop was North Carolina.⁴

The Piedmont Frontier, 1750–1810

To Germans from Pennsylvania the southern Piedmont had both economic and cultural advantages. Attracted by news of cheaper and better farmland, the newcomers settled in ethnic enclaves largely sheltered from outside influence. In this part of North Carolina, later carved into the counties of Rowan (1753), Mecklenburg (1762), Burke (1777), Lincoln (1779), Cabarrus (1792), and several others in the 19th century, isolated German farm families perpetuated their Old World culture right up to the Civil War and even beyond.

To keep literacy and language alive in the hinterland, they erected one-room schoolhouses and hired German-speaking teachers. Lutherans and German Reformed church members intermarried frequently but worshipped separately. They built common churches and hired missionary preachers coming directly from Europe. One of their ministers advised them to avoid “mixed marriages” with their British neighbors. The “English in these regions,” he explained, “belong to no religious denomination, and do not permit their children to be baptized nor send them to school.” To the faithful, secular neighbors were suspect. In Salisbury, two German missionaries saw a man in stocks at the courthouse and wondered if he were one of their flock. “The criminal is certainly not a German,” an indignant parishioner replied.... Never has a German stood in the pillory in Salisbury; nor has ever a German been hung in this place.”⁵

The Piedmont frontier was rapidly filling by the time the Limbaughs arrived. In the 1790 Census, 6,839 inhabitants were counted in the four southwest counties of North Carolina—not including the Limbaugh family members, apparently still in transit and missed by the tabulators. The senior Limbaugh, at nearly sixty too old for farming, left cows and crops to his sons. Putting education and experience to good use in administrative and civic affairs, he served on juries, witnessed deeds and wills, and evidently took up teaching, at least part-time, in one of several German-language schools in the area. His reputation as a “German school teacher” was well established by the time he left Carolina.⁶

While Fred Sr. stayed close to the more established German settlements around Salisbury, his three eldest sons had other ideas. That spring Fred Jr. bought 185 acres on a branch of the Catawba River in Lincoln County, some fifty miles west of Salisbury. He needed more land to support a growing family, with one young daughter and another on the way. He and his wife had at least five children in the first ten years of their marriage. There is a considerable gap between their ages—a reflection of either a high incidence of infant mortality or the lack of good records. Ordinary German-American families in this era were very large. His neighbors, the Mulls, Shells and Killians, had at

least six, ten, and nine children, respectively. Rev. Arnold Roschen, a Lutheran pastor along the Yadkin River in 1789, reported regularly serving families with thirteen or fourteen children.⁷

Considering the typical rural German family pattern in this era, Peter was a better example than his older brother. Reaching adulthood soon after arriving in Salisbury, he was anxious to find a wife and start a family. In 1791 he married Anna Maria Lingel, the daughter of a German farmer in the area. They had at least eleven children over the next twenty-five years. In the 1790s he and his younger brother Henry farmed 223 acres along Dutch Buffalo Creek, twenty miles south of Salisbury, land his father had purchased in 1792 (then in Mecklenburg County but part of Cabarrus when the new county was organized). Following in his father's footsteps, Peter served his community on juries and road crews and made enough money at farming to expand family and fortune.

After the turn of the century he purchased 350 acres of farmland in Burke County, on the upper waters of the Catawba River some seventy-five miles west of Dutch Buffalo Creek, and moved there about 1802. For the next fifteen years Peter and his growing family remained in the Carolina Piedmont, but conventional farming took its toll. German farmers had brought with them both tools and methods from Pennsylvania. Their huge barns and extensive vegetable gardens distinguished them from non-German neighbors, but using traditional farming methods led to rapid soil exhaustion and declining production. By the first quarter of the 19th century degraded landscapes and rural poverty were already beginning to appear. What motivated Peter's decision to move after the War of 1812 cannot be determined with any certainty, but poor crops and declining income must have had an impact. New Indian treaties that ceded the Tennessee Valley and removed the native tribes opened new lands to speculators and settlers alike. In 1817 he sold out and joined the land rush to Tennessee.⁸

The Mysterious Traveler: Christian Limbaugh

Of all the early Limbaughs, Christian was the most adventurous and controversial, if not the most successful. He is better known than any of his kinfolk, thanks to the documentary record he left behind as an

army captain and assistant Indian agent in the American Southeast during the War of 1812. His career spanned the first two decades of the nineteenth century, a period of uncertainty for the young United States as it struggled to win international respect. The new nation's leaders wanted to avoid conflict if possible, but at the same time tried to satisfy the insatiable appetite of its agrarian expansionists by extending its northern, western, and southern borders. Young Limbaugh was caught up in this early expression of "manifest destiny," but while serving his country he also tried to serve himself.

Born in Northampton County at the start of the Revolution, Christian was only twelve when his family came to Carolina. In Rowan County he lived with his parents for a few years before striking out on his own. The first evidence of independence is his marriage either in 1793 or 1796 (the actual date is confused in the historical record) to Catharina Hess, the daughter of a local farmer. Many Hess names appear in the early census records, but I have found little more about this young girl who caught his eye, probably at the same Dutch Buffalo Creek Church his family attended. If we can believe Christian's personal account, the marriage was a mistake from almost the very first.

In a divorce petition he sent to the North Carolina legislature in 1805—the only legal way out of a marriage in those days—he told a sordid story that has been used by modern historians to illustrate the state of race relations in the antebellum South. He said he lived with her "but a short time . . . in a state of the most poignant misery." On April 24, 1799—the only explicit date in the petition—he abandoned her, but said nothing about a child, Betsy, whom he may or may not have fathered in 1796 but never claimed or supported. The reasons he listed for leaving were designed to appeal to the racial and cultural predilections of southern lawmakers, most of them slaveholding churchgoers. Her temper was "rude" and "ungovernable," he complained. More important, he "frequently had reason to believe, that her immoral & indecent turn of mind led her to be connected with other men than myself." After he left, he explained, she moved to Lincoln County, where "she was looked upon as infamous" because she was rumored to have been "delivered of one or more Mulatto children." In

Figure 6 Christian Limbaugh's
Divorce Petition

A page from Christian Limbaugh's 1805 divorce petition to the North Carolina State Legislature. He married Catharina Hess in the mid-1790s but sought a divorce after abandoning her because of her "infamous" and "immoral" behavior—code for miscegenation, a crime in almost every state at the time. Not surprisingly, she was pardoned by the governor after a county court convicted her of infanticide. But for unknown reasons the legislature rejected his petition and left him married to Hess. That is doubtless one reason he escaped to Spanish Florida in 1815 to live with his second—or perhaps third—wife and family.

The petition of
Christian Limbaugh
In Senate Decem^r 9th 1805
For Read & referred
to the Committee on
Divorce & Alimony
By order
Attest M^{rs} Clerk
in House of Commons
3^d Dec 1805 read
& passed by the Senate
By order J. H. H.
Rejected
W. Brandon

March 1804, he went on, the superior court at Salisbury convicted her “of having barbarously murdered her infant child, which was generally believed . . . to have been a mulatto.” Later, “through the clemency of our Governor she was pardoned under the gallows.”⁹

How much fiction is mixed with fact in this story is hard to decide. Independent evidence corroborates at least some of it. But sullyng a white woman’s reputation in that era carried risks to the accuser. A sensational contemporary libel trial made that clear. In 1809 James Cheetham wrote a book published in New York claiming that Thomas Paine, the famous author of *Common Sense*, had fathered an illegitimate child with a married woman in Paris. The woman, Mme. Margaret Brazier Bonneville, denied the allegation and charged that Cheetham

was a liar. Her complaint prompted the State of New York to bring action against the author for libel. Cheetham lost the case after William Sampson, the prosecutor, made a passionate appeal to the jury:

Innocence is in all other wrongs, against all other strokes of man's injustice or oppression, a sevenfold shield. Not so where woman's honor is assailed. Suspicion there is worse than death itself.... The man who dares attack it, is of all other criminals the greatest.... never was he who set his cloven hoof upon a woman's honor worthy of the name of man.... in the catalogue of crimes, none could be found more base than his.... Not murder—for he who murders life, murders all sorrow with it; but he has doomed this lady to days of sorrow and to lingering death....¹⁰

Mme. Bonneville's vindication came six years after Catharina Limbaugh was convicted in a Rowan County court and "sentenced to be hanged on April 27th between 12 & 4 o'clock on Friday for having killed a male child." Catharina did not have a good lawyer to defend her, but she did have a good friend, Ed Jones. From Salisbury he wrote to the governor of North Carolina on her behalf, using the same race-baiting, patriarchal sentiment heard later in the Cheetham case:

She was convicted on clear full testimony but she is a woman—was left unprotected desolate and in poverty by her vagabond husband, it is said she expected his return and that her crime was caused by such expectation.... [The murder was] not an example so dangerous to society as most others.¹¹

Such logic may have persuaded the governor, but Catharina's dark-skinned daughter was not so lucky. A Rowan County court in 1803 declared Betsy to be "an orphan of Christian Limboh" and apprenticed her to a family acquaintance, John Fraly, until she was eighteen. In return she was to be given "a bed & furniture & Spinning wheel." As a ward of the court she had bondsmen to ensure her good behavior. In 1817 they had to pay £500 to "indemnify the county for a child

begotten on the body of Betsey Limbock,” which required “the usual allowance, twenty five dollars for the first year and twelve dollars for the second and third years each.”¹²

Meanwhile, the protagonist of this tragedy had launched a military career. In 1805, while his divorce was still pending, Christian Limbaugh enlisted in Captain McCaul’s company of the Second United States Regiment. Organized in 1791 to bolster General Arthur St. Clair’s campaign against Indian resistance in the Old Northwest, the regiment attracted some 3,000 men from New England, Delaware, and South Carolina with a \$6 bounty paid to each new recruit. When Limbaugh joined, McCaul’s unit was stationed in Tennessee, part of the War Department’s effort to extend American military power southwestward. The Spanish borderlands looked promising to aggressive American planters and traders, but they were not yet under the American flag. After Georgia’s cession of the old Yazoo Strip in 1802, the United States took charge of a broad swath of land all the way to the Mississippi. A year later the Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the U.S. That still left the two Floridas in foreign hands, divided at the Apalachicola River into two separate provinces: the peninsula of East Florida, and the coastal mainland of West Florida below the 32nd parallel.¹³

Despite the international claims of imperial powers, the borderlands between what is now western Georgia and eastern Alabama were occupied in Christian Limbaugh’s day by the Muscogee people in a loose alliance then known as the Creek Confederacy. After the American Revolution, Britain and the United States competed to win the loyalty of Muscogee and other native peoples in the borderlands. Before the War of 1812 Britain won the trade wars by offering superior goods. The British also had a political advantage because of Spain’s troubles with Napoleon at home. With her colonies untended and vulnerable, Spain preferred the British to the aggressive Americans on her New World border, and allowed a British firm, Pantón, Leslie and Company, to monopolize trade in both East and West Florida. After William Pantón died in 1801, one of the partners, Thomas Forbes, carried on the business under his name and turned control of West Florida trade over to Pantón’s nephews, James and John Innerarity.¹⁴

But even if the Muscogee preferred the British, they could not keep out the Americans. By the 1790s the borderlands were under constant pressure from frontier traders, speculators, and farmers, as well expansionists and other visionaries anticipating America's march across the continent. Missionaries moved in to "civilize" and "Christianize" native peoples, hoping to make productive farmers out of "savages." Reformers thought a humanitarian effort was better than outright extermination, but in either case the outcome was disastrous for those on the receiving end, regardless of where or when Old and New World cultures clashed.¹⁵

American Indian policy was still in its formative stages when President Washington appointed his friend Benjamin Hawkins as Indian agent for all tribes south of the Ohio River. A "proud and wealthy" aristocrat from a prominent colonial family, Hawkins was a Princeton graduate, a member of Washington's staff during the Revolution, a delegate to the Continental Congress, and later a U.S. senator from North Carolina. Like many other early progressive reformers, he was convinced that American Indians had to change or die. From 1796 until his own death in 1816 he lived and labored at the Creek Agency, a dedicated public servant. Yet as Joel Martin demonstrates in an important revisionist monograph, Hawkins's cultural prejudices got in the way of his "positive intentions." He was honest and upright, with higher moral and intellectual gifts than the average 19th-century Indian agent. But the net effect of his efforts was to show Native Americans the existential dangers inherent in the advance of the white man's world. In 1813, in Martin's words, when "many Muskogees decided to revolt against Anglo-America's version of civilization, they would name Hawkins as one of their main enemies."¹⁶

Christian Limbaugh entered this dynamic southeastern Indian scene sometime between 1806 and 1808, after serving in the Second U.S. Regiment well enough to earn a captain's commission. Perhaps it was the North Carolina legislature's denial of his divorce petition that led him to leave Salisbury, where he had been tasked with recruiting his German-American neighbors. Rather than assume responsibility for his first wife and her children, he apparently resigned his military com-

pected. Like their brethren elsewhere they tried to win the friendship and trust of the “savages” before preaching to them. But trust was elusive when ulterior motives lay behind almost every endeavor. Progress to missionaries in that era meant both saving souls and changing lifeways. Christianity made little headway among the Muscogee until the 1820s—after they had been decimated by war, disease, starvation, surrender, and removal.¹⁸

Benjamin Hawkins welcomed the missionaries as fellow servants in a charitable effort to civilize the lowly Indians, but he was more interested in their practical skills than their religion. The two Moravians had been weavers and tinsmiths in Germany before they joined the missionary endeavor. Hawkins arranged for them to live with his family while they built a cabin and shops at the lower end of the compound. When they were finally ready to teach Indians the white man’s religion, the Creek agent kept them isolated. He allowed only a few Indians at a time into the compound, expecting the missionaries to visit the Creek towns instead. But they knew little English and even less Muscogee. The result was frustration and ultimately failure.

The two Moravians kept a diary during their years at the Creek Agency. It documents their religious difficulties as well as chronic struggles with malaria and other subtropical diseases. Almost every page records bouts of fever, jaundice, or diarrhea. Even building suitable living quarters and sheds for work and storage took nearly two years to complete. In the interim they contracted with Hawkins for food, supplies, transportation, and other services.

Though sectarian differences may have complicated relations among the white males at the agency, they were unified by a common patriarchal Euro-American culture that regarded women as weak and all people of color as inferior. Ironically, instead of serving Indians, their limitations reduced the missionaries to preaching mostly to Hawkins’s English-speaking slaves. But even that was part of the Divine Plan, a sectarian version of the White Man’s Burden. As Peterson told his superiors, “Since it appears that the Savior wants to awaken the Negroes from their sinful slumbers, we are anxious to tell you as fully as possible, so as to enable you to consider them in your prayers.”¹⁹

Though the diary frequently mentions Hawkins, his family, and his slaves, it makes only passing reference to other agency personnel. Before 1808, Christian Limbaugh remains an elusive figure, a shadowy subordinate to Hawkins, presumably doing his job but keeping his distance from the Moravians. Unfortunately, Limbaugh left no personal papers himself, but he was not charitable toward real or perceived enemies. What he thought of Moravians is unknown, but he evidently visited the Moravian community near his old Salisbury home on more than one occasion. An interpreter told the missionaries in 1811 that “I have heard much about your congregation and wish at some time I might go to Salem where Mr. Limbaugh spent several weeks last fall.”²⁰

In the Moravian archives at Winston-Salem is a map of the agency compound where Benjamin Hawkins and his staff lived and worked. It shows a house marked “Mr. Limbaugh” next to agency headquarters, directly across the street from the Hawkins family’s private residence. The fact that Hawkins’s assistant had a house to himself is suggestive not only of his standing at the Creek Agency, but also of his marital status. The Moravian missionaries, defenders of conventional Euro-American morality, do not mention any untoward family relationships that might have compromised the young former military officer. The diary does refer, however, to his “wife” and indirectly suggests he had a family at the agency. Some have assumed that this means he had an Indian family, but thus far no direct evidence has surfaced to support that notion.

Certainly it was not unusual for Euro-American males to take native wives, especially if they lived or worked beyond the confines of polite eastern society. Most of those wives, however, and any offspring produced, were left behind if their mates ever returned to civilization. What makes Christian Limbaugh’s situation different is the high-profile marriage to his notorious first wife, the rejection of his divorce petition by the North Carolina legislature, and the second wife and family he claimed in Spanish Florida and Cuba. While living at the Creek Agency he may have decided that he was “safe” to take another wife. But it had to be done privately and perhaps even secretly. He could not afford being labeled a bigamist if he wanted to keep his job

as a U.S. government agent. This difficult legal status may explain why no documents have yet surfaced proving a second marriage. It may also provide motivation for his decision in 1815 to escape beyond the jurisdiction of the United States.²¹

That he did remarry after leaving his first wife, however, is beyond question. Official documents in Cuba make this abundantly clear. The real mystery is when and where. Recently a descendant of Maria Luisa Limbaugh Howard Collison Barlow Cowan located church and government records in Havana certifying that Maria, born about 1804, was the daughter of Cristiano Limbaugh and Luisa Howard. Limbaugh's life in West Florida and Cuba after he left the Creek agency will be discussed later in this chapter, but Maria's ties to the wandering officer make it obvious that he had more than a passing liaison with Luisa Howard before launching his short career with the Indian service. His connection to the Howard family cannot be explained until an exhaustive investigation of all possible sources in both Cuba and the United States has been completed, and even then the full story may never be known.

His life as an officer in the Federal Indian Service, then a branch of the War Department, begins to reveal itself in the pages of the Moravian diary as well as letters written by Hawkins to the secretary of war. Aside from Hawkins's correspondence, the diary is the only first-hand account of activities at the Creek Agency between 1807 and 1813. The first mention of the assistant agent refers to his house. One night in June 1808 the missionaries "were awakened by an alarm of a fire caused by the carelessness of a Negro in the kitchen. Fortunately, the Colonel had been waked early enough for it to be extinguished. Had it spread, Mr. Limbaugh's residence, which is under the same roof and separate only by a wall of logs, would have burned." Apparently a separate house was constructed for him soon after this incident. Below these homes, on both sides of the street, were small shops for the blacksmith and other artisans, and a dozen cabins to house the slave labor force that Hawkins brought with him from North Carolina.²²

"Mr. Limbaugh," as he was now formally called, must have had considerable prior experience in the borderlands before accepting the Creek position. By 1809 he was at least fluent enough in the Musco-

gee tongue to travel alone and translate for his boss at the agency. An incident that year involving illegal liquor trafficking along the lower Alabama River is indicative of his growing importance. In a letter to Hawkins, Big Warrior, spokesman for the lower Creek towns, said that his suspicions were aroused when some white traders coming down the river on a heavily loaded flatboat told him they had been authorized by President Madison to sell whiskey to the southern Indians. To bolster the claim, they showed him a trading permit allegedly signed by Hawkins himself! Hawkins let the Muscogee chiefs decide how to handle the matter, but sent his assistant, Mr. Limbaugh, to help the chiefs investigate.²³

Despite several letters to the War Department implying that the assistant agent had considerable courage and prowess, the Moravian diary shows him in a much different light. In the spring of 1810 his horse was stolen by a runaway slave purchased two weeks earlier by the missionaries. A month after the incident, they laconically reported, “the Negro was captured in Georgia and hanged.” Late that summer the missionaries rode with “the Limbaughs” and agency staff, including Hawkins’s Muscogee wife and children, as they headed for the pin-ey woods to escape the annual epidemic of “fevers” that plagued the South. One clue to what the Moravians really thought of the assistant agent is revealed in an entry describing a trip in the spring of 1811, when high water made travel difficult. Brother Peterson accompanied Hawkins and a party of seven officials and assistants, all on horseback as they rode toward an Indian town thirty miles on the other side of the Chattahoochee River, where talks were planned with Muscogee leaders and some British mercantile representatives about settling old debts. Reaching the Chattahoochee on May 5, the party had to cross on a rickety ferry three at a time. Peterson described what happened when his turn came:

Three of us, Mr. Limbaugh, Mr. Lewis [the Agency blacksmith], and I, along with our horses, went with the ferry. When about at the center of the river my horse shied, was backed up by Mr. Limbaugh and then lunged forward and pulled me backward into

the river where it jumped on my right leg, injuring it with its iron shoe. Never having learned to swim, when I came up I struggled to swim and managed to stay afloat while the swift current carried me down stream. The Negro [ferryman's assistant], who was rowing across with the ferry, left it to rescue me. He got close enough so that he could have rescued me within two minutes, but to my consternation, Mr. Limbaugh was so frightened that he called to the Negro and insisted upon being rescued first ...

The missionary survived the ordeal by hanging on to his horse's mane until reaching the shore, where he was plucked from the water by a young Indian working for the ferry owner.²⁴

Arriving at the trip's destination proved a profound disappointment to Brother Peterson. Not knowing the native language, and lacking an interpreter, he could not communicate with Muscogee leaders. Perhaps it was just as well. Reflecting bitterly on the general mission experience, Peterson provided a rationale for failure:

It was too bad that I was not able to tell them the real purpose of our being here was to teach the Word of God. Too many whites were present who would make light of the Word of God and we did not want to get involved in an argument with them. Most of them are escaped criminals from Georgia and elsewhere who are hiding with the Indians.²⁵

Given Christian Limbaugh's cloudy past and dubious future, he may have entered Brother Peterson's thoughts on the subject of "escaped criminals," perhaps not at the end of this trip but surely later. One insidious comment in the missionary diary hints at the gathering storm ahead. Late in April 1812 Brother Burckhard had a "severe attack of fever which left him after several days." While he was still recuperating,

Mr. Limbaugh, as we had feared, notified us that he no longer would be able to serve us our meals. Had he told us a month earlier we might have prepared ourselves for cooking. Fortunately,

the Lord came to our rescue. Upon conferring we decided to ask one of our neighbors, Mr. Hall, a saddler, and found him willing to accommodate us for a month. Mr. Limbaugh, who must obey his wife and is devious, thought he had put us in a predicament. Instead, he turned Col. Hawkins and his family, who dislike him, against himself. Now he is angry because we have been accommodated by Mr. Hall.²⁶

Three years later, Mr. Limbaugh suddenly resigned his position and fled to Pensacola, perhaps fearing a board of inquiry looking into his financial affairs. By that time, however, the Moravians were gone and their diary closed. In the interim were events both nationally and locally that provide a striking contrast to the dark side of his career. His reputation rose substantially during the Creek War of 1813–14.

Ominous events in 1811 and 1812 foretold rising tensions between three ethnic color lines involved in the war: red, white, and black, with many shades in between. Overlapping these were competing international land and property claims that had to be sorted out between Spain, Britain, and the United States on the one hand, and native tribes in the disputed borderlands on the other. All this came during a pan-Indian movement led by Tecumseh and his brother, the Shawnee Prophet. Encouraged by the British, they fanned the fires of native revolt in the West and South just as the brash Americans were about to declare war on Britain. The War of 1812 started ostensibly over British violations of American rights on the high seas, but American land greed and British meddling in the southwest borderlands were major contributing factors.

Tecumseh's task in Creek country was complicated by the lack of unity among various Muscogee leaders. As scholars have long known, before its "discovery" by European explorers America was a diverse and complex mixture of languages, religions, customs, and traditions. In the colonial period the European invasion added to the cultural mosaic. Historian Andrew Frank has documented the many modes of biculturalism that thrived in the borderlands of the Southeast and Gulf regions. After centuries of exposure to the languages, material culture, and

customs of Anglo-European traders, American planters, and escaped African-American slaves, the Muscogee and their neighbors had lost or transformed many older customs. Intermarriage, for example, was a common practice. Frank counted at least 800 Creek women who had Euro-American spouses, and many of their children were bilingual.²⁷

But while biculturalism diversified Muscogee lifeways, diversity also undermined Muscogee unity. Interior or upper towns of the Creek Confederacy in central Alabama followed more traditional customs than the lower towns along the rivers and paths of Georgia and eastern Alabama that were more exposed to American, Spanish, and British influences. Each year the chiefs of each town gathered to address complaints, but often came away without resolving fundamental issues. Tecumseh's visit aroused the upper Creek towns, where the "Red Sticks," or prowar faction, were most active.²⁸

The pan-Indian movement may also have contributed to the stirrings of a slave revolt, one of the worst fears among southern slaveholders. Slavery was considered essential to white economic development in the Tidewater plantations of South Carolina and Georgia, which by the American Revolution had more slaves than whites. Though traditional slavery among Muscogee and other native peoples was widespread, it was more humane than chattel slavery practiced by the colonists. In practical terms, with open borderlands beckoning nearby, revolt produced more runaways than violent rebels. After the Revolution, Georgia and other states paid natives in the borderlands to return escaped slaves, dead or alive. As more mixed-blood Indians became planters and ranchers, they kept slaves themselves. The expansion of slavery inland thus contributed to slaveholder anxiety in the borderlands.²⁹

Christian Limbaugh confronted those fears firsthand in 1811, when he had temporary charge of the Creek Agency while Benjamin Hawkins was away on a trip. He learned that one of Hawkins's slaves, a black man named Phil, had attended several meetings held by the missionaries. Phil then decided to take up preaching himself, and was now telling other slaves not to listen to the white preachers. Limbaugh aroused the Hawkins family. Mrs. Hawkins, herself of mixed blood, took charge of the punishment. She had Phil whipped, not because

of his preaching, she claimed, but because he and another instigator “took it upon themselves to judge us.” Later, when both Hawkins and his wife were away, Limbaugh had to deal with another intemperate slave preacher, a Baptist from South Carolina traveling with his white master. Interrupting a stolid Moravian sermon during a missionary meeting at the agency, the slave “howled like a wolf” and “acted crazy,” doubtless reflecting the excitement stirred by frontier revival meetings then sweeping the South. Limbaugh stopped any further craziness.³⁰

Though unruly slaves seemed ominous, more serious was a revolt within the Creek Confederacy. By 1812 the Red Sticks in the upper Creek towns had openly rejected the leadership of the lower Creek towns, threatening not only peaceful Indians but neighboring white settlements as well as travelers passing through Creek lands. Hawkins was ill during much of this critical period, unable to travel and dependant on aides to conduct agency business. He lay in bed, surrounded and cared for by his common-law Indian wife Lavinia and their six children. Scholars have correctly identified one of Hawkins’s assistants, Alexander Cornells, an assimilated half-blood Creek with extensive property. He was perhaps the only native speaker who could easily translate the Muscogee language into English. The other assistant, Christian Limbaugh, has been both overlooked and confused in scholarly literature. One historian thought he was a “half-breed ... who lived among the Indians.” Another claimed he was “originally from Germany.” None has linked him with the North Carolina Limbaughs, and no one has fully examined his role at the Creek Agency. Yet the documentary record he and others have left behind during the War of 1812 provide sufficient evidence to evaluate his strengths and limitations as a wartime official.³¹

That Christian Limbaugh had the full trust and confidence of his ailing chief seems clear as the Creek trouble brewed. By January 1812 Hawkins felt so near death that he wrote a will leaving his property to his half-blood family, and to forestall any legal problems for his heirs he called in one of the Moravian preachers to conduct an official marriage ceremony with Lavinia. Limbaugh and several others witnessed both the will and the wedding.³²

A few months later, after the rebellious Red Sticks had killed a prominent white planter on the Federal Road, followed by more depredations at Duck Creek and the kidnapping and rape of a white woman, Limbaugh wrote on Hawkins's behalf to the secretary of war explaining the circumstances. When the Creek council met in June at a lower Creek town, as one historian has written, Hawkins sent "his interpreter and assistant, Christian Limbaugh, and through him Hawkins delivered a talk address to all the nation. Probably no other talk Hawkins ever delivered to the Creeks was couched in such harsh language. He demanded immediate and drastic punishment for all crimes."³³

In truth, Hawkins did not foresee the extent of the trouble, and he came under some criticism from nervous Georgia officials for doing more talking than acting. Limbaugh played an important role that summer in helping bring the perpetrators to justice, Muscogee fashion. Hawkins sent him to warn two lower Creek chiefs, Billy McIntosh of Coweta and Little Prince of Broken Arrow, that they must either organize an expedition against the Red Sticks or the Georgia militia would. Gary Burton, an Alabama pastor and historian, recently concluded that "Hawkins apparently chose wisely, for the persuasive powers of these men prevailed." The assistant agent went on to Tuckabatchee, the Creek town (now a site in Alabama) where Big Warrior, the leader of the Creek Confederacy, persuaded other chiefs to hunt down the killers. By September 1812, eight had been caught and executed. Seven others were whipped and "cropped" by having their ears and noses cut off, the traditional Muscogee way of handling lawbreakers. Upon hearing his deputy's report, Hawkins assured the Georgia governor that retribution had been swift and complete.³⁴

Action against a few Red Sticks did not end the uprising, however. A month later, with Hawkins still sick in bed at the Agency, his two agents arrived at the fall council meeting in Tuckabatchee, armed with another speech their boss had written that Limbaugh was to recite and Corrells interpret before the gathered chiefs. John Innerarity also appeared before the council, representing Forbes, the British trading company. He wanted to collect thousands of dollars of unpaid debts that Muscogee in the rebellious upper Creek towns had incurred long before.

Innerarity's journal is the only written record of these proceedings.

For several days Innerarity watched incomers fill the large lodge houses that surrounded the square where the meeting would convene. Muscogee chiefs and families, representatives from Red Stick towns and their Seminole allies, agency delegates, Forbes officials, Spanish observers, wives, children, and camp followers all assembled together in the Indian village, an international crowd in buckskin and feathers. But the mood was tense. Civil war loomed, and so did the prospect of a military invasion. Big Warrior recognized the stakes and tried to avoid any impropriety that would undermine his influence. Leadership positions among the Muscogee, as elsewhere in most tribal organizations, depended on respect, not fear of reprisal. When Innerarity tried to get an early appointment, the Creek head chief "said that the eyes of everyone were fixed on him & he must be very circumspect."³⁵

After preliminary ceremonies, including purification in sweat lodges and the ritual consumption of a "Black Drink" that Innerarity thought was "of a deleterious quality," the formal talks got underway. Christian Limbaugh was the first speaker. He "read Col. Hawkin's Talk which was a strong and bitter one," the British trader reported. Since Cornells, the native interpreter, was present, it seems logical to assume that Limbaugh spoke in English, pausing every few sentences while Cornells translated. Nothing in Innerarity's eyewitness record suggests Limbaugh spoke to the Muscogee in their own tongue. He may have understood the language, and even spoke a few words, but it stretches credibility to claim he was fluent enough to deliver a speech with all the right nuances and inflections.

From Innerarity's journal we have a flavor of the drama as the assistant agent stood before them, keenly aware of the need to "shock and awe," to borrow a modern phrase. Casting a dark eye about he accused them of "various thefts & depredations," declaring that "there still remains a balance of one life against them, before this account of blood could be adjusted." The next day he was at it again, itemizing the crimes, listing the thefts of property and the names of victims, and concluding with a stern warning to Creek and Seminole alike: stop the rebels and punish those responsible or "a 1000 men were on their march

from Georgia to chasten them & would take their land from them.”³⁶

The circle of chiefs listened patiently to the white man’s words and then turned to their headmen for a response. William McIntosh, chief of the Coweta, later killed by his own people for violating tribal law, spoke first on behalf of the lower towns. He disputed some of the charges, countered others with claims against white timber thieves, and said the Confederacy would pay proven claims with hard currency promised them by the government in earlier treaties. The last to speak was Big Warrior. He laid much of the blame on the Federal Road that sliced through their lands, bringing whites and Muscogee into close contact and giving “rise to endless complaint.” He claimed to have foreseen the result of allowing the road, but he had accepted the collective decision of the council. Now they had to suffer the consequences.³⁷

The talks spread out over several more days, with plenary sessions followed by informal meetings in separate lodges. A Camp David conference participant today could recognize the protocol, perhaps even the backbiting and intrigue that belied the formal cordiality of the principals. At night the British merchant’s lodge was a hotbed of discussion. “The house was full of visitors & has been so since my arrival,” Innerarity wrote. His status as creditor gave him considerable leverage, but not enough to get all he wanted. Indians young and old, though internally divided, were unanimous in opposing any form of interest tacked on to longstanding bills.

Other conversations were more encouraging, especially in the diplomatic dance between the British and their American rivals. Alex Cornells, openly loyal to Benjamin Hawkins, privately hated the arrogant Americans. He told the British he was “a faithful friend” and would do what he could on their behalf. Evidently he was talking about the overdue debt payments, but as a British subject Innerarity may have been thinking about more strategic possibilities. Indians had been used before as pawns in wars between international rivals, and they would be again during the War of 1812.³⁸

Christian Limbaugh actively participated in these after-hour deliberations, but his motives are unclear. Where did his loyalties lie? He

dined with the British almost every night, and was “very friendly.” Was it cunning or naiveté that led him to show his hosts the private instructions from Hawkins that said not to interfere with efforts to settle the Forbes company claims? He was also present but apparently silent when Cornells denounced the Americans. Did his personal debts to the British merchants cause him to defect, as one archivist has suggested? If so he played a dangerous and deceptive role as double agent in a long period of warfare from 1812 to 1815.³⁹

The Muscogee civil war that began in the spring of 1813 had cultural origins, as we have seen, but it was directly tied to the larger conflict between Britain and the United States. Spain could only look on from the sidelines, helpless to stop the dissolution of her New World empire. In April, after major fighting ended in Canada, large numbers of British troops became available to campaign farther south. The previous winter, Hawkins had warned the War Department about a possible British invasion of the two Floridas. This news was red meat to the War Hawks in Congress. Having already jumped the Spanish claims west of the Perdido River, President Madison now sent General Wilkinson with a column of troops to occupy Mobile Bay. But occupation was not the same as ownership. Under international law the Floridas still belonged to Spain until the Adams-Onís Treaty was signed in 1819.⁴⁰

While the British invasion of New England and the Chesapeake was the chief White House worry in 1813, in the borderlands the Creek War took a bloody toll that summer. More than 2,500 hostile Red Sticks united under Tecumseh’s call for a “holy war” against all “unbelievers,” red and white alike. One of their leaders vowed to destroy the peaceful towns and “make the land clean of the Americans or ... lose their lives.” This was no idle threat, as white settlers in the lower South soon learned. In July a war party armed with Spanish guns from Pensacola proved its mettle against untested Mississippi militia at Burnt Corn Creek. Though the native warriors ran out of gunpowder, they rallied to drive off the soldiers and then went on a rampage through the lower South. Frantic appeals from government officials for federal help finally spurred Congress. It authorized the mobilization of 3,000

militia from Tennessee and Georgia. Before they could organize, a massive force of Red Sticks slaughtered some 300 white settlers and their families who had crowded into a private compound called Fort Mims on the lower Alabama River.

The Fort Mims massacre shocked the nation and thrust Andrew Jackson into national prominence. With the blessing of Tennessee Governor Willie Blount, General Jackson marched an army of volunteers deep into Alabama, determined to give the “savages” a “final blow.” After a six-month campaign, overcoming numerous logistical and personnel problems through sheer willpower rather than military brilliance, the Nashville commander won a decisive victory at Horseshoe Bend in March 1814. Backed by the War Department, Jackson punished friend and foe alike in the final accounting. Justified as necessary to separate the Muscogee from the hostile Seminoles in Florida, the Treaty of Fort Jackson gutted the Creek Confederacy by carving out a 23-million-acre swath through Indian lands in Alabama and lower Georgia.⁴¹

During the Creek War Christian Limbaugh was stationed at the friendly Muscogee village of Coweta on the lower Chattahoochie, where Benjamin Hawkins had sent him in 1812 to enlist the help of peaceful Indians and organize resistance to the Red Stick uprising. Close to the Florida line, Limbaugh was an important conduit for strategic intelligence. Some of his reports made national headlines and increased pressure on the government to intervene. In June 1813 he witnessed the Red Stick buildup firsthand and warned of an impending attack on the peaceful lower towns. In August he “authenticated” two letters from Big Warrior that described the fight at Burnt Corn Creek and the depredations made by war parties against the peaceful towns. The Creek spokesman and other friendly chiefs urged the government to “make haste” with food and arms to sustain the peace party and discourage wavering Indians from joining the rebels.⁴²

After the massacre at Fort Mims, Hawkins relied on Limbaugh to scout the hostile terrain and “prepare the way” for the three converging columns of militia from Georgia, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Marauding Indians frequently disrupted regular postal dispatches between Coweta and agency headquarters on the Flint River. To improve deliv-

Coweta 10th July 1814

Sir,

I am ordered by Colo Hawkins Agent for Indians
 Affairs to send you the enclosed consolidated returns.
 Colo Hawkins has returned to the agency for a few
 days, but will return again in a few ^{shorter} days to meet
 you at Fort Jackson.

I have the honor to be
 very respectfully,
 Sir,
 your most Obedient
 Servant
 Christian Limbaugh
 App^t Agent for S. Co.

Major Genl Jackson

Figure 8 Christian Limbaugh's Letter to Andrew Jackson, 1814

General Jackson and his army of volunteers had destroyed 900 hostile Creek warriors and ended the Creek Confederacy at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend earlier that year. Those friendly Muscogee who remained were destitute, and Christian Limbaugh's job as assistant to the Creek agent was to survey the survivors and assess their needs. This is the only letter discovered that he sent directly to the victorious general. Letter accompanying "Col. B. Hawkins's report of Indians craving rations from U.S.," 10 July 1814, from RG 75, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Microfilm M271, NARA.

ery the two agents hired friendly Indians with fast horses whenever they were available, but communication remained difficult until the end of hostilities after 1815.⁴³

Whether Christian Limbaugh's dispatches from Coweta made any difference in the course of the Creek War is difficult to judge. Benjamin Hawkins was certainly guided by them, but his letters to the War Department were mostly filed and forgotten after Jackson took charge of his Tennessee army and marched south in October 1813.

While he remained at Coweta, Limbaugh was close to the southern border and well positioned to gather important intelligence about British plans and preparations. Whether he communicated his observations directly to General Jackson is not known. The only extant letter Limbaugh wrote Jackson is a report after the final battle listing the claims of friendly Muscogee against the defeated Red Sticks. The total came to more than \$108,000, but the claims were never paid.⁴⁴

During the Creek campaign Jackson's men had killed nearly 2,000 warriors. The Red Stick remnants escaped while the victors were celebrating. They fled South with other dejected upper Creeks and their families, reduced to begging along the way until they could join the unconquered Seminoles across the border. Hawkins in June 1814 reported them "making peace as fast they can and taking food." But the British had other ideas. The crushing victory at Horseshoe Bend had ended the civil war but not the grand British strategy to check American expansion by creating an Indian buffer state in the South and West. That would require invading the Gulf Coast, retaking Mobile, and marching west to New Orleans. Cutting off American access to the Gulf would be a trump card in the British diplomatic deck at Ghent, where delegates from both sides were gathering to discuss terms of peace.⁴⁵

To enlist runaway slaves and renegade Indians in the British cause, a detachment of marines landed at the mouth of the Apalachicola in the spring of 1814 and established a fort fifteen miles up the river at Prospect Bluff, where Forbes & Company ten years earlier had built a trading post. By promising food and arms they soon collected a crowd of some 2,000 ragged insurgents, mostly escapees from chattel slavery, including Phil, the Hawkins family's unruly servant. That summer Colonel Edward Nicholls, using some Indians from the Apalachicola outpost and another off-shore contingent of marines, occupied Pensacola in preparation for an attack on American-occupied Mobile. Spanish authorities stood by helpless, but American intelligence agents kept General Andrew Jackson, now in command of all U.S. forces in the South, abreast of every British move.⁴⁶

One of those agents was Christian Limbaugh. His outpost at Coweta, only sixty miles upriver from Prospect Bluff, was a conduit for infor-

mation gathered from friendly Indians and passed up the line to civilian and military leaders. A report to Hawkins in August formed the basis of the Creek agent's letter to Jackson warning of the British "plan to free and prepare for war all of the Blacks in this quarter." A month later Limbaugh warned Hawkins and Georgia officials that the Seminoles were planning to attack Fort Mitchell and surrounding towns along the lower Chattahoochee. Published in local papers, the alert caused "great alarm among the Citizens." To prepare for the attack, Hawkins ordered his assistant to "collect all the warriors he can ... and to hold themselves in readiness for orders."⁴⁷

The friendly chiefs of the lower towns gathered at Coweta on 9 November. Limbaugh read letters from Hawkins and Jackson, then patiently waited while a Muscogee friend, Little Prince, talked for an hour, urging his fellow warriors to speak out against the Seminoles and their British allies. There was no time to waste, he said: "[A]ll those who are not now willing to protect their own nation will be considered as hostile to the U.S." He concluded with a veiled threat: "If you are for the British say so." With no reported dissent, the assistant agent obtained pledges from 112 warriors to fight the "enemies to the United States."⁴⁸

Christian Limbaugh's work with the lower Creeks served him well and seemed to impress the War Department. For at least two years Benjamin Hawkins had talked of retirement. Late in 1814 he submitted his resignation, which President Madison accepted but put on hold pending the appointment of a replacement. On 12 December, Secretary of War James Monroe—the future president—placed Limbaugh in charge as interim agent. A few days later Monroe wrote Hawkins for a letter of recommendation:

From your knowledge of the qualifications necessary for the heads of the agency to the country and also your knowledge of Mr. Limbaugh you are well enabled to judge of his fitness to succeed you. Permit me therefore to request your confidentially & candidly to state to the Dept whether or not his appointment to that office would be a proper one. He has frequently pressed his claims for the place in case of your resignation, and enclosed

many [illegible] of his correct deportment but it is considered Expedient to want a further recommendation from you. The only anxiety on the part of the Government is to bestow the place in a Competent man.

No answer to this request has been found. The dubious tone of Monroe's letter probably reinforced Hawkins's own reservations about his brash younger assistant. Both agent and assistant kept at their regular posts for the next six months while the War Department looked elsewhere for candidates. Doubtless the indecision weighed heavily on both men.⁴⁹

In the meantime, Andrew Jackson suddenly reduced the danger of a Seminole invasion by weakening their British patrons. In September an approaching British naval squadron had to retreat under heavy fire from American guns at Fort Bowyer on Mobile Bay. On 9 November, acting with surprising speed, Jackson's men swooped down on Pensacola, easily overwhelming the small Spanish garrison. Colonel Nicholls and his unit, which had occupied the town since August, beat a hasty retreat back to Prospect Bluff. Ostensibly acting without orders, Jackson fed expansionist fires and frustrated British strategic plans. No longer could the invaders count on West Florida's fine harbors as a starting point. Nor could they rely on their disgruntled Indian allies, who never received the aid they had been promised. The British armada of sixty ships that left Chesapeake Bay late in November for New Orleans had to navigate the tricky waters of the Mississippi Delta in order to land the 14,000 men aboard. By the time Lord Pakenham's veterans reached New Orleans, Jackson's defenses were well prepared.⁵⁰

Christian Limbaugh did not participate in the Battle of New Orleans. The stunning American victory on 8 January 1815, and Jackson's subsequent adventures in Florida are beyond the scope of this chapter. Hawkins's aide remained at Coweta, considering his options but keeping his eye on Colonel Nicholls and his motley force of Seminoles, Red Sticks, and freed slaves at Prospect Bluff. That spring and summer the assistant agent exhausted government food stores trying to avoid a humanitarian disaster along the lower Apalachicola, where more than

3,500 Muscogee depended on government supplies until they could harvest a new crop. Starving Indians upriver provided an opportunity for Nicholls to lure them away from the Americans with British supplies and cash to their chiefs. Limbaugh sent a stark warning to his boss: "I can assure you if there is not a Speedy measure taken to brake up that gang of Negros down there Together with the british Fort all the negros in this Country will run away, and a great many of the friendly indians will turn hostile."⁵¹

The "gang of Negros" that so aroused the assistant agent included not only some of Hawkins's runaways, but also a number of slaves who had come from Forbes & Company's plantations in Spanish Florida. As Spanish power declined so did the fortunes of this British-chartered trading firm. Writing off a decade or more of bad loans had cost thousands of dollars to John Forbes and his two partners, the Innerarity brothers. They had also staked much of their fortunes on Florida land and chattel slaves. To protect their wide-ranging property and interests, both fully exposed in the volatile borderlands during the War of 1812, company officials had to decide which of the competing powers to support. The choice was made for them by British military planners. Hoping to build allies in the borderlands, they built outposts on the coast and lured away slaves and Indians with promises of freedom and support. American policy was quite the opposite. Andrew Jackson spoke for his fellow planters and frontiersmen in defending the institution of slavery and warning of the "Treachery of the Indian character."⁵²

Mutual interests may have attracted Forbes & Company to the American cause, but in practical terms it was risky to take sides. Instead, Forbes and the Innerarity brothers stayed neutral during the War of 1812, but to ensure that their land claims would be honored they became Spanish citizens. Hedging their bets did not mean losing business, however. In 1813, after General Wilkinson's men took control of Mobile Bay, James Innerarity won the friendship of the American general by selling him gunpowder and other supplies. The next year his brother John in Pensacola refused to sell arms to renegade Indians from the British fort at Prospect Bluff. Colonel Nicholls was furious, calling the Innerarity brothers "traitors" and accusing them

of spying for the U.S. In turn, John heaped invective on Nicholls. In a letter from Pensacola to Christian Limbaugh, he complained bitterly about the mischief caused by “our deadly enemy”: “Here where our character of neutrality ought to have been our shield, the inhabitants have suffered severely by the loss of their slaves thro Colonel Nicholls, whose name is synonymus with every thing that is odious.”⁵³

Why was Innerarity writing Christian Limbaugh? The answer may help explain the assistant agent’s business affairs after he left the United States. As we have seen, the two men first became acquainted during talks with Muscogee leaders in the fall of 1812. Innerarity doubtless saw the advantages of cultivating good relations with American officials. On the other hand, Limbaugh may have been “heavily in debt” by that time to the Forbes & Company, as one historian has suggested, so his motives may be suspect for keeping in contact with his new friend. He rode to Pensacola for a personal visit at least once, and probably many more times after Colonel Nicholls’s exploits at Prospect Bluff drove the Innerarity brothers closer to the American cause. Moving to Coweta by 1813 lessened his ties to Hawkins, put him closer to the U.S. boundary, and enabled him to reach Pensacola in four or five days on horseback. Undoubtedly he kept John Innerarity well informed on both British and Indian affairs right up to his last assignment recording damage claims for losses during the Creek War.

Late in August 1815, Christian Limbaugh crossed the border into West Florida for the last time. Benjamin Hawkins informed the secretary of war a few days later:

An occurrence very unexpected has happened. [illeg] C. Limbaugh an assistant in the agency for Indian affairs who was long in public service, sober, and as I [have?] believed honest, resigned his appointment on the 22 and was on the 26th on his way to Pensacola where he wrote me last. There had been some recriminations between him and two Indian [Country men?] in which I informed him I should have a court of inquiry the last of this month. He has left most of his property behind and reports to me where it is. His residence was at Coweta sixty miles from the Agency.⁵⁴

The news may have surprised his superiors, but even without the negative implications of Hawkins's letter the resignation is understandable. Limbaugh had heard nothing from the War Department, but surely he knew by then that his request to replace the retiring Hawkins had been denied. Here was a seasoned veteran of the Indian service with no chance for higher office. Rejected by his own government, under a cloud of suspicion, with a second wife and family while still legally tied to the first, it probably took little persuasion to cross the border and find a new home.

The ride to Pensacola took Christian Limbaugh through a tract of timber and swampland at the north end of Escambia Bay, thirteen miles from town. He had been there before with John Innerarity, perhaps several times over the past three years. Crossing to the west side of Jacob's Creek, he stopped a moment to survey the mixed forest of yellow pine, white oak, red cedar, juniper, cypress, and ash along the bayou that spread out before him. Maybe he saw some fish jumping for low-flying insects and a few wild turkeys in the distance. He learned that the place was called Turkey Island, and the bayou Bass Hole—names probably passed down from its first owner, John Miller, who had acquired the land in 1771 when the Floridas were in British hands. Miller's son Thomas was the current title holder, a Pensacola businessman who had changed religion and citizenship to conform with Spanish rules for land ownership.⁵⁵

With a growing demand for lumber in Pensacola, the tract seemed a good prospect for development. John Innerarity must have encouraged his friend to acquire it. All three partners in Forbes & Company had both money and motivation. Innerarity owned the adjoining tract on the east side of Jacob's Creek, having purchased it from Miller in 1815. The Pensacola trader may have helped finance Limbaugh's acquisition in exchange for employing him as foreman, or at least caretaker, for his own property across the creek. Extant documents in the Panton Leslie papers suggest that the relationship was based on a mutually rewarding business deal. That is a more likely scenario than assuming that Limbaugh bought land with money stolen from Muscogee annuities—a crime often attributed to American Indian agents in the 19th

century. Indeed, a letter he wrote in July from Turkey Island to Secretary Monroe accusing Hawkins of “unjustly confiscating his money and land in the Creek Nation” implies just the opposite. Without supporting evidence either way we are left only with vague accusations and a perpetual shadow over his reputation. However it was financed, the expatriate American, along with his second wife and family, settled on the land in the spring of 1816—or perhaps on Innerarity’s property next door until they could build a cabin of their own.⁵⁶

The close proximity of Limbaugh’s new home and family gave John Innerarity a safety value in August, when newspapers reported an “Insurgent Flotilla” of unknown origin seemingly destined for Pensacola. Fear was a powerful weapon in the arsenal of piracy. No isolated Caribbean or Gulf Coast settlement in that era was safe from marauders flying a black flag. The British Admiralty even tried enlisting the Lafitte brothers and their gang of privateers in its New Orleans campaign. Innerarity’s first thought when he read the news was to protect his family and friends, mostly of French Creole origin. “I have taken the precaution since the 12th,” he wrote his brother, “to send my family to Limbaugh’s in company with Madame Coulon, her sister, Mme Guillemard, Minet, Alix, Mme Chevalier, Mme Maxent, Mme Ciril Morant & all the children. A number of other ladies have left town.”

The danger passed without incident, but two years later another raider from the north took over the town. Andrew Jackson, the impetuous American general, reoccupied Pensacola in May 1818 to stop Spanish officials interfering with supply shipments from Forbes & Company to his troops. After several weeks the Americans left and the Spaniards, mostly Cubanos, marched back in. They held it until 1819, when the Floridas were ceded to the United States.⁵⁷

In November 1816 the tract’s new owner filed papers in Pensacola to secure title. A month later the Cuban surveyor completed his work and issued a preliminary certificate. Whatever his intent, Limbaugh did not stay very long in West Florida. Land documents record that his land was “cleared and cultivated” from 1817 to 1819, but that was a standard phrase that may or may not have reflected the actual facts on the ground. Just a year after survey, correspondence in the Panton

Table 3 Cuban Descendants of Christian (Christiano) Limbaugh

1	Christian (Christiano) Limbaugh b. Abt. 1772, Pennsylvania + Luisa Howard
2	Maria Luisa Limbaugh b. Abt. 1804, St. Augustine, Florida d. Abt. 13 Aug. 1880, Santander, Spain + William Collison b. Philadelphia, Penn. m. Matanzas, Cuba, 22 Aug. 1823 d. Matanzas, April 1826 + Robert G. Barlow b. Abt 1796, London, England m. 24 May 1826, Havana, Cuba d. Aug. 1830, Havana
3	Augustín Roberto Mateo Barlow d. 7 Dec. 1858
3	María Emilia Barlow b. 24 Dec. 1825 + José Manuel Pequeño Marcó del Pont b. Lugo, Pontevedra, Spain m. 22 June 1854, Havana, Cuba
4	María Antonia Pequeño Barlow d. May 1901, Cuba
4	María Amelia Victoria Pequeño Barlow b. 1862, Havana, Cuba d. 1 Sept. 1927 + José María Carballeira Gignoy b. La Coruña, Spain d. 13 Aug. 1923, Havana
5	Manuel Carballeira Pequeño
5	Emilia Carballeira Pequeño
5	María Antonia Carballeira Pequeño d. 12 Dec. 1951, Cuba + Mariano Blanco Quintero b. 1890 in Cuba m. Abt 1915, Cuba d. 1964, Cuba + Wilson Guillermo Cowan b. 1800, Pennsylvania m. 25 May 1831, Cuba d. 1 Nov. 1860, Cuba
3	Guillermo Cowan Limbaugh
3	Amanda Paula Cowan Limbaugh
3	Oscar Ruperto Cowan Limbaugh
3	Jorge Cowan Limbaugh
3	Luis Agapito Cowan Limbaugh
3	Carolina Cowan Limbaugh
3	Alberto Cowan Limbaugh
3	Juan Cowan Limbaugh

This chart, recently compiled from church and state documents found in the Cuban National Archives by Carmen Blanco, illustrates the main family line in Cuba (up to 1964) that is believed to trace back to Christian Limbaugh

Leslie papers infers that the former agent was in Cuba working for John Forbes. Other letters indicate that by 1819 he was employed by James Innerarity on a plantation near Camarioca, a town on the Cuban coast in Matanzas province. Later that same year Limbaugh's land in West Florida passed to John Innerarity, although Innerarity's title was clouded for years because of a dispute of unknown origins that developed between Innerarity and Richard K. Call, a Pensacola lawyer, land office receiver, and later governor of Florida.⁵⁸

For historians and genealogists looking for facts, the last years of Christian Limbaugh's life are as uncertain as the first. A trail of docu-

ments has established at least the outlines of a business relationship with Forbes & Company in Cuba, but the details are still vague and may never be clarified. An aura of mystery has always surrounded his personal affairs, and efforts to clarify and explain the apparent contradictions of his family history have thus far proved fruitless. Church and state documents in the Cuban archives dating from the 1820s to the 1880s firmly establish his ties to Luisa Howard, an American citizen, and the marriages and progeny of his apparently very attractive daughter, Maria Luisa Limbaugh.⁵⁹ It is still not clear whether he had any direct connection with his siblings after he left North Carolina, although in 1812, about the time of his father's death, he paid taxes on part of the Limbaugh lands in German Township, Cape Girardeau County, Missouri. He may have traveled upriver from New Orleans in 1823 when he landed there from Havana, but the visit was brief, for the next year he was back in Cuba suing an Englishmen for failure to pay a debt. The last we learn of this frontier opportunist is a brief mention in U.S. immigration records for 1831: "Christian Limbaugh, Gentleman, Age 54 arrived at the port of Providence, Rhode Island. He was a resident of the U.S. returning from Havana."⁶⁰

Frederick Limbaugh and his immediate family left Pennsylvania just as the new nation was poised to exploit the heartland of America's trans-Appalachian frontier. They took up lands in western North Carolina, but stayed only long enough to build families and establish connections with other German-American pioneers looking beyond the mountains. Cheap lands lay ahead for farmers and speculators alike. Christian Limbaugh, whether he realized it or not, set a family precedent by leaving the United States in search of new opportunities in the Spanish borderlands. A few years later his father and most of his siblings followed his lead, but headed West instead of South to the loamy soils, deciduous forests, and verdant hills across the Mississippi.

Carolina to Missouri: The Limbaughs, 1800–1870

Americans looked South and West in ever-larger numbers after the American Revolution. For thousands of small farmers, merchants, town-planners, and speculators, equal opportunity to settle virgin land was a natural right guaranteed by the Declaration of Independence. These “plain folk” on the margins of settlement defied efforts by the rich and powerful to exploit the nation’s resources at the expense of the masses. They were revolutionary pioneers, jumping ahead of surveyors and land officers, sometimes squatting on huge tracts already staked by land scouts and speculators on behalf of absentee owners. Those who held prior claims fought back, citing inherent protections of the English common law, treaty obligations, and the constitutional inviolability of contracts. Overlapping claims and costly lawsuits tied up the courts for years and delayed development of contested property. In the meantime, Congress and the states imposed stricter requirements for “proving up” land claims, but at the same they gradually liberalized land laws to protect the property rights of the “little man.” By the Civil War the modern system of land survey, occupation, and ownership was fully operational, with democratic features that encouraged small farmers and families having little means but great expectations.¹

The Spanish Era in Louisiana

Economic self-interest lay behind the political ideology and the religious fervor that justified expansion as “manifest destiny.” Abe Lincoln allegedly identified that motive by telling a story about a farmer who explained, “I ain’t greedy ’bout land. I only want what jines mine.” But moving beyond the Appalachians in the 1780s meant changing the direction of American commerce. Before good roads and railways provided easy east–west access, bulk products grown west of the mountains moved south on barges, flatboats, and steamers over the vast network of navigable rivers and streams that define the Mississippi Valley. But getting to market required crossing an undefined international boundary. Spanish officials in 1784 tried to discourage land-hungry *Norteamericanos* by prohibiting their commercial access to New Orleans, but Spanish vulnerabilities and political pressure from outraged expansionists led to renewed diplomatic talks. The result was Pinckney’s Treaty, confirmed by the Senate early in 1796, which fixed the boundary between the United States and Spanish Louisiana at the 31st parallel and restored free trade on the Mississippi.²

Losing control over the mouth of the Mississippi was symptomatic of Spain’s decline as an imperial power. By 1810 her New World empire was beset by invasion, revolution, and war, leaving only Cuba and a few marginal possessions still loyal to the Spanish crown. As early as the mid-1780s, some officials had tried to stave off the American advance toward Texas and Mexico by building a population buffer zone in Louisiana. That province, whose vague boundaries extended from the Gulf to Canada and the Mississippi to the Rocky Mountains, had been in French hands since the 17th century. During the Seven Year’s War (1755–1763), France deeded Louisiana to Spain. Between New Orleans and St. Louis, settlements were sparse. In Upper Louisiana above the mouth of the Arkansas, the Euro-American population consisted of a few French fur traders and small farmers in and around St. Louis, who traded mostly with Indian tribes along the Missouri River.³

Spanish efforts to protect her remote hinterland possessions were handicapped by the same geographic conditions that later stymied Napoleon’s bid to rebuild France’s North American empire and England’s

effort to protect Canada from a Yankee invasion during the War of 1812. The Americans were simply too close and the European powers too far away. By the late 18th century the Spanish monarchy had no money to aid immigrants or reinforce its tiny military garrisons in the New World, and efforts to attract European Catholics or French Canadians with offers of free land in distant Louisiana failed miserably. Inviting land-hungry American Protestants to enter remote and poorly administered Catholic lands seems foolish in hindsight, but to some local Spanish officials it seemed the only choice left.⁴

In August 1787 a royal decree opened the borderlands to legal entry by American immigrants, provided they pay their own expenses, change their religion if not already Catholic, and take an oath of loyalty to the Spanish crown. Settlers received grants ranging from 40 to 800 arpents (36 to 677 acres). In Louisiana the new policy remained in effect for fifteen years, until Spain secretly ceded the province back to France to satisfy Napoleon's latest imperial ambitions. To speed the flow of newcomers, Spanish officials sometimes offered *empresarios* generous land grants in return for bringing new settlers to Louisiana. In truth, as Frederick Jackson Turner recognized early in his famous studies of the westward movement, American borderland farmers needed few incentives to leave worn-out fields and take up cheap lands farther west.⁵

Early Settlement at Cape Girardeau

Spain's new land policy attracted the Limbaughs and their neighbors in the North Carolina Piedmont, but they were not the first Americans to cross the Mississippi. In 1788 Colonel George Morgan of Pennsylvania, a Revolutionary War veteran, prevailed on Don Diego de Gardoqui, the Spanish envoy in Washington, D.C., to promote an American colonizing expedition to Upper Louisiana. Morgan and his followers scouted settlement possibilities on the west side of the Mississippi and chose a site later called New Madrid. His plan proved overly ambitious, however, and alarmed the Spanish authorities, who thought he was planning to carve out a separate empire. They turned against him, and within a year he had returned in disgust to the States. Most of the immigrants who accompanied him left as well.⁶

Morgan's departure coincided with the arrival of Louis Lorimier, a French Canadian fur trader pushed out of the Old Northwest along with thousands of native Americans as the Euro-American frontier crossed the Ohio River. Married to a halfblood Shawnee, Lorimier made an offer to promote settlement of dispossessed Shawnee and Delaware tribes from the United States that earned special favors with Spanish authorities. Allowing disgruntled Indians to relocate might provide the population buffer Spain need to protect Upper Louisiana, not only from aggressive Americans but the hostile Osage farther west. In 1793 the Spanish governor offered Lorimier a monopoly of the Indian trade all the way south to the Arkansas River, and sweetened the pot by giving him a land grant of 8,000 arpents (8,320 acres). As his headquarters Lorimier established a trading post at Cape Girardeau, fifty miles north of New Madrid on the west side of the Mississippi.⁷

Bounded on the north by Apple Creek and on the south by swamp-land called Tywappity Bottom, the 900-square-mile Cape Girardeau district had been traversed by French and Spanish explorers long before Lorimier arrived. Heavily wooded and watered by numerous rivers and streams that the first settlers, ignoring native nomenclature, proudly named after themselves, the land was a small farmer's paradise, with deep clay soils in the bottomlands and lush bluegrass covering the rolling hills. Migrants to Upper Louisiana from the South Atlantic states and the southern Appalachians found seasons and climatic conditions similar to those back home. But above all they liked the cheap land suitable for farming, especially virgin soil that had not been worn out by the primitive agricultural practices of the day.⁸

Soil exhaustion was a constant threat to antebellum farmers large and small. Before science and technology combined to make intensive agriculture possible, commercial farming required either frequent crop rotation or fresh soil. Some farmers rose high enough in status and wealth to join the planter class, but plantation agriculture was best suited to the broad valleys and canebreaks of the Tidewater counties, or better yet to the dark chalky soils and grassy savannahs of the "Black Belt" across Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. In the words of southern historian Frank L. Owsley, the "rural folk of the Upper

South” were biased by sentiment and nostalgia to look for geographic conditions that were “part of his mental furniture.” They moved “where climate, soil, timber, and the grasses indicated that the new country would be hospitable to the familiar old crops.”⁹

How sympathetic Lorimier was to the plight of his wife’s kinfolk is not clear from his actions. He managed to resettle a band of Shawnees along Apple Creek at the northern boundary of the district, and some Delawares near Ste. Genevieve, but his focus soon changed from aiding dispossessed natives to promoting American immigration. By the mid-1790s, after a series of military campaigns and new treaties had reduced the presence of Indians and their foreign allies on the trans-Appalachian Plateau, the American frontier pressed westward. Farm families, speculators, town planners, gamblers one and all, followed improved wagon roads through the mountain gaps and along the water courses to settle new lands opening beyond earlier settlements in Kentucky, Tennessee, and the lower Ohio Valley. Some of the most adventurous Americans had already crossed the Mississippi when Lorimier obtained his Cape Girardeau grant. As the largest landowner, attracting settlers to develop the district seemed an obvious road to riches. Spanish authorities, lacking any good alternatives, appointed him local commandant and land officer to document, if not regulate, the immigrant tide.¹⁰

District commandants in Upper Louisiana served at the pleasure of the governor general in New Orleans, but in practice they had broad discretionary powers, both military and civil. For nearly a decade after 1795 Lorimier was Cape Girardeau’s chief dispenser of public lands. While his secretary, Barthelemy Cousin, handled the bookkeeping chores and served as translator, Lorimier accepted petitions for grants that were then forwarded to the lieutenant governor in St. Louis for review. If that official approved the grant, it then had to be surveyed and reviewed before it was sent on to New Orleans for final approval by the governor general. Each step had to be completed and certified with official signatures before the applicant could apply for full title. Understandably, many immigrants didn’t bother with the time and expense involved in securing a deed. Local commandants were usu-

ally sympathetic, especially if they stood to profit from a population boom. The result was an informal process in the Spanish era: land was claimed, settled, improved, even sold or inherited, all without the legal paperwork normally involved in property transactions.¹¹

Word of attractive lands in Upper Louisiana spread quickly among American traders and speculators who were moving back and forth from wilderness to settlements in increasing numbers by the mid-1790s. The first American reportedly to stake a claim at Cape Girardeau was Andrew Ramsay, a Virginia planter from Harper's Ferry, who had ventured far inland during the Revolution as a courier for General Irvine. He was still trying to get Congress to pay for his war service when he crossed the Mississippi in 1795 looking for rich bottomlands where he could grow cotton and other staples with slave labor. The hospitable Spanish commandant gave Ramsay permission to settle next to Lorimier's own claim at Big Swamp along the southern boundary of the district. Ramsay's son later secured a claim of his own along Ramsay's Creek. By the end of the Spanish era, through direct grants or transfers from other concessioners, the Ramsay family had developed plantations totaling over 1,500 acres. With fourteen field hands they were the third largest slaveowners in the district. Only Lorimier himself and another Virginia family, the Byrds, owned more slaves.¹²

Introducing slavery into this narrative requires some digression on the social and cultural life of the antebellum South. Planter families like the Ramsays and Byrds had different lifestyles from the small farmers who lived in the upper valleys and mountains west of the Virginia and Carolina Tidewater. As we have described in an earlier chapter, 18th-century Piedmont German farmers in North Carolina had a low level of material culture. Historian Avery Craven pointed out long ago that the living conditions of poor whites and blacks were generally quite similar, with homespun clothes, small cabins that "varied little in size or comfort," food consisting of bacon, corn bread, a few greens, and "home-made coffee." Yet white "yeoman farmers" had little in common with the "white trash" at the very bottom of white society. Only slaves were lower in white opinion.¹³

Instead of staple crops like cotton and tobacco, these upland farmers grew corn and wheat on cleared fields. They planted apples and other stone fruit and raised cattle and hogs that fed on grasses and mast from the trees that grew so abundantly in the hills and narrow valleys. Few owned slaves, but when extra help was needed they rented fieldhands and often toiled alongside them to complete the work. Historian F. N. Boney described a hard-working Virginia farmer from Southampton County, Nathaniel Francis, who closely reflects the characteristics of his middle-class neighbors in the Carolina Piedmont. With a small inheritance and a few slaves, he married a hard-working wife, raised a large family, went to church regularly, and took advantage of economic opportunities to fulfill the farmer's version of the American dream: "He was never a great planter, but his diversified farming operations were certainly successful."¹⁴

The Ramsay venture anticipated the arrival of other Americans looking for land around Cape Girardeau in the late 1790s. At first a few individuals trickled in from the closest frontier settlements, but the volume grew rapidly after Pinckney's Treaty in 1795 opened the Mississippi to American commerce. For the next two years Spanish officials in Louisiana promoted American immigration, even posting notices inviting Anglo-Americans to take advantage of generous land grants in return for becoming Catholics and taking an oath of loyalty to the Spanish crown. Predictably, the newcomers eagerly signed up for the grants but ignored the terms. In 1799 the Spanish administration tried to reverse course, but in Upper Louisiana the government was too weak to resist even if it had wanted to. Some local officials, like Louis Lorimier, ignored the warnings from New Orleans and continued to welcome the trans-Mississippi transplants.¹⁵

Lorimier's jurisdiction over the Cape Girardeau district gave him plenty of land to dispense on behalf of the Spanish monarchy, which officially "owned" the territory. Most American farmers sought higher ground, unlike French-Canadian traders, who stayed close to navigable rivers. They wanted good soils and lighter woods, distant from the thick forests and boggy estuaries considered unhealthy and unproductive, as well as too hard to clear with the primitive girdling meth-

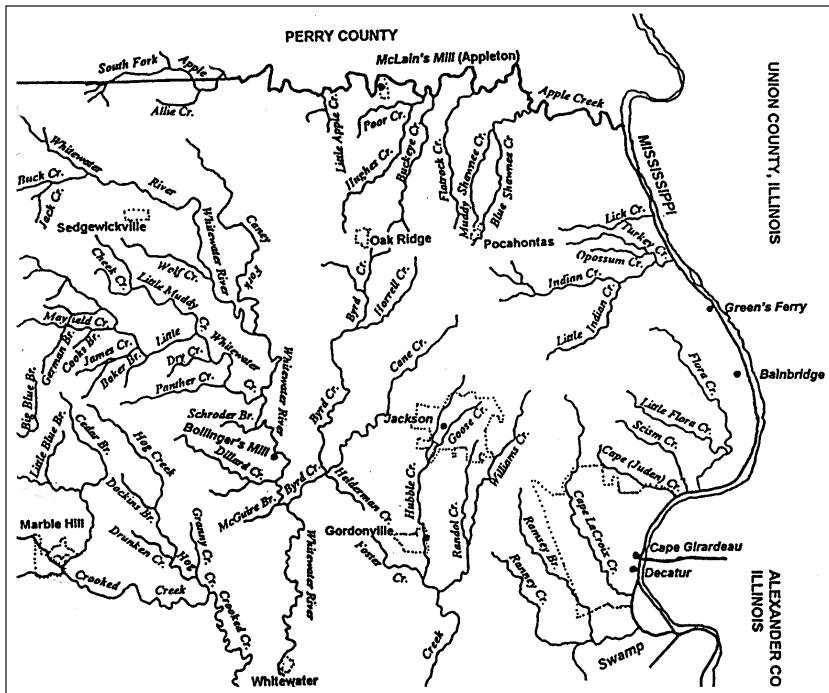


Figure 9 Part of Cape Girardeau County

This map of Cape Girardeau County shows the river systems and communities a few years after Missouri achieved statehood. In 1851 the boundary lines changed when the county lost its western half to Bollinger County, including the Limbaugh family lands along Little Muddy Creek, a tributary of the Whitewater River. From *Abstracts of Cape Girardeau County Deeds, Books A/B-F, 1797-1826*, by Bill Eddleman and Jane Randol Jackson for the Cape Girardeau County Genealogical Society.

ods of the day. In 1797, twenty-five settlers and their families, mostly from Virginia and Kentucky, arrived to take up claims along former Spanish streams proudly renamed for the family patriarchs—Randall, Hubble, and Ramsay. Claim size was modest, averaging around 300 arpents (250 acres). Another thirteen families arrived the next year, many following the paths of relatives and friends, infilling along the same streams to some extent but also spreading north and west to the district borderlands. Amos Byrd came in 1799 after a short stay in Tennessee, bringing a large flock of offspring and a number of slaves. They settled along Byrd's Creek, fifteen miles northwest of the trading post

at Cape Girardeau. That same year, Lorimier granted land concessions to thirty-six other families. By the end of 1799 there were at least 400 American settlers and 100 slaves scattered among the hills and valleys of the district.¹⁶

The Bollinger Family and Their Piedmont Neighbors

Not far behind these pioneers was George Frederick Bollinger, a twenty-six-year old farmer from Lincoln County, North Carolina. His German-speaking Swiss parents had emigrated to southwestern Pennsylvania in the 1730s before following the southern trek to the Carolina Piedmont some thirty years later. The youngest of ten sons, he came west in the 1790s like so many other restless American farmers and planters. His father, Heinrich Matthias Bollinger, a Patriot killed by Tories at his home near Salisbury early in the Revolution, left considerable wealth in property and slaves. Following American practice, the Bollinger estate was distributed to the heirs in equal shares, but it was not enough to satisfy all the needs of this prolific family. After the Revolution some of them began moving westward. Young Bollinger, who preferred to be called “Frederick” instead of his baptismal first name, was unmarried and doesn’t appear in the 1790 Census, but four of his brothers headed households in Lincoln County, and two more by that time were exploring prospects in Kentucky and Tennessee. By 1800 the Bollingers were scattered across the American South all the way to the Mississippi and beyond.¹⁷

Frederick Bollinger had big dreams, but what precipitated his actual move west is difficult to determine given the lack of family records left behind. Postmodern social historians have identified two ideas motivating young males in planter families: 1) the traditional “quest” for material wealth; 2) the psychic effort to escape the emotional and economic ties that kept them closely bound to their nuclear families. Bollinger’s family had not yet reached planter status by 1797. He wanted better economic opportunities, but rather than escape the ties that bind, he pioneered his family’s search for fertile soils. Like “the children of Israel,” as Owsley phrased it, those who wanted to move often “sent their Calebs and Joshuas ahead to spy out the land and prepare

the way.” It seems clear from their subsequent history that the Bollingers not only encouraged the youngest son to explore the West, but backed the expedition with money and resources. Perhaps their rural neighbors in North Carolina chipped in, for by the mid-1790s word of Spain’s more receptive attitude had spread far and wide.¹⁸

Who were these rural neighbors? Secondary literature speaks of them as having “German-Swiss backgrounds,” but most were first- or second-generation immigrants from the southwestern German provinces along the Rhine and its tributaries. They spoke German at home and identified with the Calvinists of the German Reformed Church. Many appear in the 1790 Census living near the Bollingers in Lincoln County. Military districts established during the Revolution became convenient county subunits later used by census takers before the development of townships. All adult males within each district were assigned to regiments made up of companies of fifty men each. In the Company 3 were two of Frederick’s older brothers, Henry and Matthias, along with young men from the Hartle, Killian, Probst, Snell, and Yount families. Next door in Company 4 were more Younts, as well as Asbrauners, Cotners, Millers, Mulls, and Shells. Company 5 included Delphs and Grounts, as well as still more Killians and Younts. Two other Bollinger brothers, Philip and Joseph, had homes within the bounds of Company 6, as well as several Ramsays, two Statlers (or Stotler), and another Probst. In Companies 9 and 10 were five Slinkard families.

Of this close-knit German group, only the Nyswongers, also Missouri-bound, were listed outside a district. Others who eventually trek to Missouri—the Kryzes, Welkers, Seabaughs, and Limbaughs—were not in the Lincoln County rolls for 1790, but they do show in the 1800 North Carolina Census, either in Lincoln County or in some other Piedmont settlement. They also appear in land records for the Cape Girardeau district.

These were clannish families, bound together by religion, language, business, and frequent intermarriage. The ties are too complex to unravel in this history, but a few examples will illustrate the endogamous relationships that characterized these first- and second-generation immigrants. Fred Slinkard married Barbara Grount in 1794. Six years

later, Barbara's relative—perhaps a brother or uncle—George Grount, married Elizabeth Statler, the granddaughter of Johann Peter Stadler, patriarch of a large family that had emigrated from Germany to Pennsylvania in the 1730s. The Statlers then migrated to North Carolina in 1766 to join others in the Carolina Piedmont.¹⁹

Fred Bollinger's brother Henry and a younger brother Jacob were millers in North Carolina, perhaps inspiring Fred to develop the Bollinger Mill in Missouri, one of the Cape Girardeau district's most popular, and, with a distillery attached, presumably most profitable. In the 1780s Daniel Bollinger, the third of the eleven brothers, had married a neighbor's daughter, Barbara Crites (Kryze). Philip Bollinger, two years younger than Daniel, married Elizabeth Slinkard in North Carolina. Their daughter Elizabeth married Benjamin Shell in Cape Girardeau. An unidentified relative, Moses Bollinger, probably a nephew, married Elizabeth Statler in 1813. She was the daughter of Peter Statler, son of the German immigrant. Other Bollingers were linked to the Seabaughs, a Lincoln County family that came to Missouri after the American takeover. In Missouri, Bollinger sons and daughters were also intertwined with the Shells, Statlers, and Limbaughs.²⁰

The 185 acres in Lincoln County that Fred Limbaugh Jr. had purchased in 1794 originally had been part of a 450-acre grant from North Carolina to Peter Moll, most likely a brother of John Mull, whose daughter Catherine had married Michael Shell in 1790. Sometime in the 1790s, Michael Shell's brother Casper married Frances Mull, evidently John's sister. One of Catherine and Michael Shell's children, Mary Ann, later married Jacob Limbaugh, the only son of Fred Jr. and his first wife Barbara (Crader). Fred and Barbara's eldest daughter, Virginia-born Catherine, married Joseph Nyswonger twenty-one years later in Missouri. Catherine's younger sister Susan, born in Lincoln County, married John Cotner, son of Martin Cotner, after both families had moved to Missouri. Joseph Nyswonger's father, also named Joseph, was the husband of Eva Katharina Statler, a sister of Fred Junior's second wife, Susannah. Another Shell daughter, Delilah, became the wife of Henry Limbaugh's son Daniel. Still another Shell girl married David Yount, whose family later became prominent cattle ranchers in

Southern California. The Younts and Killians were also related by marriage before they came to Missouri. One Killian descendent later married John P. Limbaugh, a grandson of Fred Sr.²¹

Many of these families came to Missouri as part of Frederick Bollinger's first colonizing expedition. Planning such a move must have taken many months. Family and friends had to be enlisted. Superfluous real and personal property had to be disposed of. Draft animals, wagons, and travel provisions had to be secured. Popular accounts give "Colonel" (or sometimes "Major") George Frederick Bollinger the leadership credit, but he received these titles much later, after he had risen to prominence in Missouri politics. How travel decisions were actually made and by whom remain a mystery. Many questions come to mind that have no easy answers, since all the details are missing.

To check the route and arrange for settlement, Fred Bollinger left the Carolinas two years before the others. He reached Cape Girardeau in 1797. How long this exploratory venture lasted is unknown. The earliest known source of information was published nine decades later in Goodspeed's *History of Southeast Missouri*. A regional historian affiliated with what was then Southeast Missouri State Normal School, Goodspeed collected and compiled written reminiscences from surviving family members. Many subsequent accounts apparently derive from this monumental subscription history. According to Goodspeed, Bollinger arrived at Lorimier's trading post along with a travel companion named "Meus" or possibly "Moose."²² The proprietor greeted them as he did other prospective settlers and invited them to explore the unclaimed lands in the district. They found what they were looking for in the northwest quadrant along the tributaries of a river already known as Whitewater. Goodspeed claims that Lorimier offered the young Carolinian "liberal land grants if he would bring a party of American colonists into the district." Apparently Bollinger, unlike Morgan and other ambitious *empresarios*, did not ask for special favors from the commandant. His personal concession later amounted to only 600 of the 5,000 arpents his own family members eventually received.²³

After scouting the site Bollinger hurried back to North Carolina, where his betrothed awaited. Elizabeth Hunsecker, most likely the

daughter of Devart Hunsecker, a farmer in the 9th company, was apparently one of seven unmarried girls living at home in 1790. They were married in 1798. Their first child, Sarah, was born the next year, just before the first colonists left for Upper Louisiana.²⁴

Goodspeed's account says that Bollinger led the first group of nineteen families to Missouri during the winter of 1799–1800. At first glance the date seems dubious, but winter travel had its advantages in a day when roads were unimproved cattle trails through dense forests. Boggy ground and shallow streams froze in winter, and packed snow eased wagon and sled travel over uncleared stumps. To avoid icy mountain trails they probably started in October, crossing the Blue Ridge and then moving north to connect with the well-known Wilderness Trail through Cumberland Gap. The choice of local routes may have depended on how many friends or family members in the settlements along the way they could count on to provide assistance. Bollinger was doubtless grateful for help. His wife Elizabeth was ill and died soon after seeing the promised land, but baby daughter Sarah seemed to thrive on the experience. She lived the next eighty-two years in Missouri.

If the subscription histories are accurate the main Bollinger wagon train followed the Wilderness Trail through Kentucky and southern Illinois to Missouri, a route that took them across the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers in the dead of winter. In good weather they could have paid for ferry rides, but more likely they simply drove or walked across. Climatic conditions have changed considerably since the hard freezes of the early 19th century. Thick pack ice sometimes clogged even the largest rivers. Liza's trip across the frozen Ohio in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was just as credible as the Bollinger party's crossing under similar conditions a half-century before. The accounts say a large Bollinger party crossed the Mississippi at Ste. Genevieve on January 1, 1800, and reached their destination a few days later.²⁵

As soon as his charges had settled in and staked their claims, Fred Bollinger hurried back to North Carolina, for both business and personal reasons. Other colonists wanted his help, and his daughter needed a mother. In July 1802 he married another local farmer's daughter,

Sally Ramsour. She was pregnant when they started the last trek to Missouri, either that fall or the next year. With them were at least six other Lincoln County families, including two other brothers, Daniel and Henry Bollinger.²⁶

Despite his young age, Bollinger's importance as a pioneer colonizer shows clearly when we compare his family and friends from Lincoln County with the names of grant applicants along the Whitewater River and its tributaries. This northwestern quadrant of Cape Girardeau, later part of Bollinger County, was first known as the "Dutch Settlement." When the Louisiana territorial legislature organized, the area was renamed German Township. Federal land commissioners eventually confirmed seventy grants in the German district, totaling nearly 33,000 acres. In November 1803 Spanish officials took a census of the Cape Girardeau population. Of the 107 heads of families they identified, essentially all those adult males receiving land grant concessions, 46 percent were from the three North Carolina Piedmont counties of Burke, Rowan, and Lincoln. Nearly all those families had Germanic surnames (88 percent). From Lincoln County alone came forty-nine family heads, or more than one-third of the total. The Bollinger trekkers of 1800–1803 received thirty-two land grants amounting to 13,172 acres, or 40 percent of the total acreage granted.²⁷

The First Limbaughs in Missouri

All the early accounts of Frederick Bollinger's first colonizing trip to Missouri in 1800 list Frederick Limbaugh as one of the colonists, but which one? Goodspeed mentions the "families" of Fred Limbaugh and twenty others who were along. Houck does not name those with Bollinger, only that in 1800 the "early settlers" included "Frederick Limbaugh (Limbach), a German school teacher, and his two sons Michael and Fredrick, junior." This seems clear enough, but it is difficult to square with the documentary records they left behind in North Carolina. The 1800 census for Lincoln County lists Fred Junior and his family, but not his father. Since census takers officially started work on 4 August of that year and had nine months to complete their task, the younger Fred could easily have returned in time to be counted. Why

Table 4 Bollinger Trekkers from North Carolina to the Whitewater

Earliest Date Arrived	Last Name	First Name	Documentation	Granted
1799	Bollinger	Philip (son of Daniel)	Lorimier A99	
1799	Bollinger	Matthias	Lorimier A160	
1799	Bollinger	George Frederick	Lorimier A159; settlement right (U.S.)	640 acres
1799	Statler (Stotler)	Adam	Lorimier A163; settlement right (U.S.)	
1800	Asherbrauner	Daniel (Urban)	Lorimier A35	
1800	Baker	Joseph	Settlement right (U.S.)	505 acres
1800	Bollinger	William, son of John?, under D. Ashbrauner	Lorimier A31; settlement right (U.S.)	660 acres
1800	Bollinger	John Sr.	Lorimier A105, permit 1800	519 acres
1800	Bollinger	Henry, son of Philip	Lorimier A100; settlement right (U.S.)	741 arpents
1800	Grount	George, Daniel	Lorimier A33, 96	640 acres
1800	Grount	George	Settlement right (U.S.)	640 acres
1800	Limbaugh	Fred Jr.	Lorimier B17	529 acres
1801	Aidinger	J. P., assignee	Lorimier A10	300 acres
1801	Aidinger	Christopher	Lorimier B35	465 acres
1803	Barks	Handel	Lorimier B18	584 acres
1803	Bollinger	John, son of John	Lorimier A105	
1803	Bollinger	Daniel, son of John	Lorimier A104	
1803	Bollinger	Henry, son of Daniel	Lorimier A97	701 acres
1803	Bollinger	Henry, son of John	Settlement right (U.S.)	640 acres
1803	Cothner	Martin		707 acres
1803	Hartle	Peter	Lorimier B23	600 acres
1803	Krytz (Crytz)	John, or rep. (Peter)	Lorimier A28	640 acres
1803	Limbaugh	Fred Sr.	Lorimier B16	640 acres
1803	Miller	John (Jacob)	Lorimier B19, 32	640 acres
1803	Miller	Isaac	Lorimier B30	340 acres
1803	Murphy	Francis, reps. (James, William)	Lorimier A58, 154	640 acres
1804	Nyswanger	Joseph (Jr. and Sr.)	Lorimier A162, 103	
	Cothner	John	Settlement right (U.S.)	444 acres
	Cothner	Jacob	Settlement right (U.S.)	430 arpents
	Abernathee	Washington (John)	Lorimier A76; settlement right (U.S.)	
	Bollinger	Daniel Sr.	Lorimier A161 concession	
	Grount	Peter	Settlement right (U.S.)	640 acres
	Patterson	William (David, John, Andrew)	Permit, Lorimier A1, 2, 272	640 acres
	Probst	Jacob	Lorimier A107; settlement right (U.S.)	640 acres
	Probst	John	Concession	
	Slinker	Frederick	Lorimier A27; settlement right (U.S.)	742 acres
	Slinker	Jacob, widow	Concession	
	Statler	Peter	Settlement right (U.S.)	742 acres
	Welker	Leonard	Settlement right (U.S.)	640 acres

the senior Limbaugh is not included in the census is unknown, but most likely it is because part of the 1800 records were inadvertently destroyed. It could not be because he was in Missouri. Houck has his facts wrong. Surely Fred Sr. was feeling all of his sixty-six years by 1800, but even if he felt hardy enough to travel a thousand miles by wagon or horseback over dirt roads, he could not have returned in time to meet his professional obligations. In little more than a decade after escaping from critics and creditors in Pennsylvania, he had tried to rebuild in the Carolina Piedmont. Working as a lawyer and advisor served both financial needs and reputation. Court records document his activities. In April 1800 he proved a will in Cabarrus County; two weeks later he witnessed a deed there. In September he acted as interpreter and translator in a Rowan County case involving a property dispute between the heirs of a prominent German landowner.

In the meantime, his son Fred Jr. probably rode west with the Bolinger party, stayed long enough to survey the property (or properties) that he and his family would later claim, then returned to Lincoln County until his father was ready to move. We already know that Bolinger himself came back for another group of colonists as soon as he could; young Fred doubtless came with him. When Fred Jr. in March 1803 sold his 32-acre Lincoln County parcel on the South Fork of Henry's River, his father witnessed the deed.²⁸

The senior Limbaugh also had property to dispose of before he left the old German settlements along Dutch Buffalo Creek in North Carolina, but the decision to sell must have involved his younger children. In 1791 he had purchased 223 acres on the Rowan–Cabarrus county line, letting his sons Peter and Henry work the land until they had families and means of their own. Ten years later Peter and Henry had both. With all of his children but eighteen-year-old Michael making their own way, Fred Sr. sold the Dutch Buffalo Creek property in October 1801. The independence of his children and the scattering of many German-American families the Limbaughs knew so well must have weighed heavily on the father's decision to follow his son Fred to Upper Louisiana.²⁹

Missing in this narrative are the identities of women and children

who were presumably present during family travel discussions. Surely the wives were part of the decision-making process. From her study of surviving planter family correspondence from North Carolina, Jane Turner Censer concludes that women had more influence in decisions to move than traditional scholars have acknowledged. Unfortunately, before the 1850s their names do not appear in the federal census unless they were family heads. The lack of early Limbaugh family or personal papers makes the female side of the story only a spotty record of names, dates, and events gleaned from incomplete church or court documents.³⁰

In a previous chapter we noted the marriage of Fred Sr. in 1758 to Anna Catharina Ritter, daughter of Paul Ritter. The last confirmed sighting of her is in 1795, when she is listed as the wife of Fred Sr. and one of the heirs to her father's estate. Apparently the elder Ritter distributed her share to her while he was still living. At his death in 1799 the probate abstract mentions Catherine and her husband Frederick (already) receiving £400 each as "their full portion." After that she seems to disappear completely from public documents. Probably she was dead before her husband left for Missouri. Only their unmarried youngest son Michael stayed at home until the family joined the western movement.³¹

Barbara Crader, the wife of Fred Jr., rode the wagon westward with her five surviving children, and she lived long enough to see all of them but one marry into the families of German-American neighbors she had known in North Carolina and Missouri. Some of those matrimonial ties have already been described. In 1820 Anna Limbaugh, their third daughter, who as born in 1797, married George Benjamin Cook, another Carolina German who arrived in southeast Missouri sometime after the American takeover. Barbara died in the mid-1820s, too late to see her last daughter, Mary, wed Joshua Whybark, son of the Reverend Samuel Whybark (Weiberg). His father had arrived in 1805 to tend to the German Reformed flock that Fred Bollinger brought from North Carolina.³²

By the spring of 1803 the last big group of Bollinger settlers had cleared their North Carolina obligations and were ready to travel. Re-

cords later compiled by federal land commissioners tell us who these families were and when they first staked claims in Upper Louisiana. The dates do not always agree with Goodspeed and Houck's accounts, but they contain sworn testimony by eyewitnesses and are essentially the only primary sources available.³³ It is unclear whether they traveled separately or together in one large wagon train, but they acted collectively to obtain Lorimier's authorization before they could claim land along the Whitewater and its tributaries. Whether they could hold Spanish claims after the U.S. takeover was another question unforeseen in 1803 but soon to become the dominant issue of Missouri's early development.

The Whitewater Germans and Their Disputed Settlement Rights

Americans moved west in ever-greater numbers after 1800. As foreign influence receded and the Indian threat declined, settlers flocked to the new lands opening in the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys. Both farmers and merchants looked to "free" land as the means to wealth, either by growing cash crops that could be shipped to market down the river systems, or by buying and selling the land itself. In either case, agriculture and land speculation were overlapping themes of pioneer culture.³⁴

In the Cape Girardeau district, Louis Lorimier welcomed American newcomers despite the ambivalent attitude of his Spanish superiors. A merchant and speculator himself, he recognized the symptoms of land greed and tried to capitalize on it by encouraging settlement and town development close to his own properties. In his remote district he could afford to be generous with Crown land. He gave permission to settle to anyone who asked, and any good excuse seemed to justify a special grant. In 1803, for instance, he gave 164 volunteers 300 arpents each for joining in a six weeks' campaign against marauding Creek and Mascouten war parties upriver at New Madrid.³⁵

Changing demographics proved the success of his promotional efforts, if not his personal fortune. The district census of 1803 showed an increase of 613 white inhabitants since 1799, plus 75 slaves. Most of those whites were small farmers, but with them also came gunsmiths, blacksmiths, carpenters, and merchants who settled around the trad-

ing post or in a handful of villages cropping up in the interior. Of all the Spanish administrative districts, Cape Girardeau was the most Americanized before the Louisiana Purchase. By 1806 Lorimier had mapped out the Cape townsite and was selling lots at \$100 each.³⁶

Federal land documents show that during the Spanish era some 131 family heads claimed land along the Whitewater River and its tributaries. Thirty-six of these were counted in the 1803 Spanish census along with their 177 family members—an average of almost five per family. To protect their settlement rights, most grant applicants had to demonstrate intent by making improvements on their claim. Lorimier exempted carpenters and a few others if he had need of their services. Some ignored the rules altogether. They held their claims for only a few months, then sold the unconfirmed rights to newcomers for a tidy profit. Others found tenants to hold the claim and do the hard work. Still others made only “tomahawk improvements”—cutting logs and clearing brush for a cabin site and a quick corn crop, leaving construction and cultivation for later. That seemed good enough for accommodating Spanish officials.³⁷

In January 1803 Lorimier prepared a list of 164 immigrants to whom he granted permission to settle and sent it to St. Louis for confirmation by Lt. Governor Carlos Delassus. On “List A,” as it became known, were at least 30 immigrants from Lincoln County, North Carolina, who had come west with George F. Bollinger—indeed, half were Bollinger family members. No Limbaugh names were on List A, but in July 1804 Lorimier—still in charge during the transition to American control—prepared “List B,” which included Fred Sr. and his two sons, Fred Jr. and Michael, as well as 48 others who had obtained Lorimier’s permission to settle but had not obtained formal concessions. Despite the informalities, the immigrants on these lists were not squatters or interlopers but legitimate settlers under the “laws, usages, practice, and customs of the Spanish government,” as American officials later wrote. That phrase eventually became the operational rule for determining the legitimacy of land claims during the Spanish period.³⁸

With or without Lorimier’s written confirmation, in 1803 the Limbaughs took up their property claims in the Whitewater district along

with many of their immigrant neighbors. This was the same year that Napoleon sold Louisiana to the United States after taking it from Spain two years before. Rumors had circulated earlier that the American flag would soon cross the Mississippi, but nothing was final until the Senate ratified the treaty in October. Three months later the Americans took formal control at New Orleans, but actual control in Upper Louisiana had to wait until Captain Amos Stoddard arrived in St. Louis on 3 March 1804. Spanish officials remained in office, however, and Spanish laws prevailed, until the new government could be organized and local Spanish representatives could be reappointed or replaced.³⁹

In the meantime, and even before the Louisiana Purchase was ratified, speculators grabbed as much as they could. Some French traders in the New Orleans area scoured old records and documents, hoping to tie up good land for resale when the expected flood of Americans arrived. Spain had allowed settlers or their representatives to claim up to 800 arpents (680 acres), provided they lived on the land and cultivated the claim. Most claims were modest, between 400 and 800 acres, although some exceeded these limits. Along the Whitewater, Peter Krytz claimed 1,170 arpents, John Miller 1324 arpents, and Joseph Neyswanger Senior had a concession for 1,216 arpents. Bartholomew Cousin, Lorimier's surveyor and translator, held the largest claim, 6,000 arpents, a gift for services rendered. Regardless of size, all early claims in Upper Louisiana and elsewhere came into dispute after American officials took command.⁴⁰

Settlement details became very important to verify land claims made under the Spanish regime, but they are problematical because of discrepancies in the documentary record. According to later testimony, Fred Jr. and his family arrived in the spring of 1803 as permanent settlers. By fall they had taken up a 450-acre tract on Little Whitewater Creek (identified later as Survey 2220) between the claims of Martin Cothner and Henry Bollinger, and were cutting logs for a cabin. These few particulars are corroborated by the Spanish census that fall showing Fred Jr. as head of an eight-person household. Since the younger Fred had only five known children, his father, now presumably a widower, was probably with him when the census was taken in November.

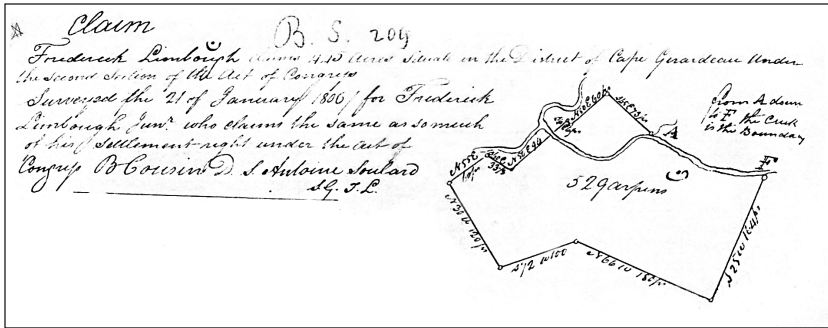


Figure 10 Surveyor's Plat Map of Survey 2220

Frederick Limbaugh Jr. arrived in Missouri with the 1800 Bollinger party and settled in 1803 along with his father. The younger Fred claimed 529 arpents in the Whitewater area, surveyed three years later by Lorimier's official surveyor, Antone Soulard. In 1809 the first U.S. Land Commissioners rejected the claim, but others confirmed Fred Jr.'s title (with some boundary adjustments) after a protracted delay while Congress and the courts decided how to solve the contentious political and legal battles over land ownership that complicated territorial expansion. From *Record Book of Land Titles*, vol. B, p. 275, dated 21 January 1806; U.S. Recorder of Land Titles, Record Group 951, in Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, Missouri.

That would square with accounts claiming that Fred Sr. soon started his own cabin and began clearing and cultivating a tract of 814 arpents (Survey 2219) on both sides of Little Muddy Creek, a branch of the Whitewater River two miles northeast of his son's land.⁴¹

Who actually did the work on the senior Limbaugh's property is unknown, but it may have been Michael, who was still too young to file his own claim. In January 1804 his father purchased a 300-arpent tract from Daniel Ashenbrauner, another Lincoln County immigrant. It was located a mile away on a branch of the Little Whitewater, very near the claim of Fred Jr. and adjacent to claims of Jeremiah Banigh and two Bollinger brothers. As soon as he turned twenty-one in November 1804, Michael claimed 300 acres of his own next to his father's purchase, but documents show that a year later Michael sold this tract to a shirtsleeve relative, Daniel Graeter (Crader). Daniel Crader was kin to Jacob Crader, the father of Barbara, the wife of Fred Jr. The Craders had migrated west with the other Bollinger colonizers. In 1803 Jacob secured permission to claim an unusually large grant of 800 arpents three miles southeast of the tract owned by Fred Sr., but he died within

months of his arrival, leaving his heirs to fight for rights to the land.⁴²

In a strange twist, one of those historical mysteries that are never adequately explained, the deed books report that either Daniel Crader or his heirs immediately sold the land purchased from Michael Limbaugh to Michael's father, Fred Sr. What happened to this property after the death of Fred Sr. has not been determined. The transaction may have been voided later, since Michael's original grant was never confirmed by U.S. Land Commission. The commissioners carefully reviewed each claim and probably discovered the discrepancy between Michael's bachelor status as of December 1803 and the claim that he had at that time "a wife and two children..."⁴³

The reason for Michael's convoluted land transactions in this period is uncertain, but it may have been related to his marriage to Catherine Wolfe. She was the daughter of a German farmer from Pennsylvania, George W. Wolfe. The Wolfes belonged to the Protestant Brethren, one of several pietist sects that made their way from central Europe to Pennsylvania in the 18th century. Informally known as Dunkers because of their baptismal rites, these "German Baptists" followed strict rules of dress and manners. They stayed out of the public mainstream, protecting their lifestyle and beliefs by keeping close to each other in isolated settlements and by marrying other church members. But rising land values and overcrowding pushed them westward along with thousands of other small farmers. Doctrinal differences also drove a wedge between eastern Brethren and younger church members moving into Kentucky and beyond. One of these "Far Western Brethren" was a church elder, Catherine's older brother, George W. Wolfe II, an ardent abolitionist. In 1803 he married Anna Hunsaker in Muhlenberg County, Kentucky, and over the next few years led Dunker followers to new lands in Missouri and Illinois. In 1806 he bought 200 acres on the Little Whitewater next to Michael's property. Whether it was religion or frontier economics that brought them together, Michael and Catherine, or "Kitty" as she was familiarly known, wasted little time with preliminaries. They were married that same year.⁴⁴

For the next few years Michael remained in the Whitewater district, perhaps working his father's land as well as his own, but at the same

time growing closer to his wife's kin. The Dunker opposition to slavery must have caused trouble with his North Carolina relatives. Meanwhile his own family grew with the addition of two girls, Fanny (born 1807) and Elizabeth (1809). As the new government began to organize locally, he was called to perform the standard duties of established residents, especially roadwork and jury service. But late in 1811 his life took another turn. Perhaps *tumble* is a better term, for the first of a series of earthquakes began that literally shook the foundations of religious experience in southeast Missouri. On 16 December at 2:00 a.m. the New Madrid quake tossed sleepers from their crude cots, and the aftershocks kept them scrambling for the next two days. In January came two more violent upheavals within a single week. Then on 7 February 1812, came the largest quake of all, conservatively estimated at 7.7 on the Richter scale by the U.S. Geological Survey.

The cumulative effect both shocked and scared fervent religious folk, who feared that the "Last Days" were upon them. Michael's brother-in-law, George Wolfe, led his Brethren flock back to a new colony across the Missouri in what was then Indiana Territory, later Union County, Illinois. Though he continued to pay taxes on land inherited from his father, Michael never returned to Missouri. In 1829 Wolfe's colony moved again, to Adams County, Illinois, where Michael lived and farmed in a pious free soil community soon caught up in the radical antislavery movement. He lived long enough to witness the end of slavery, dying in 1867 at the age of eighty-three.⁴⁵

While Michael was still a young bachelor tending to his father's land in the Whitewater district, Fred Sr. apparently taught school. The dates and details are missing or confused, so this episode in his life leaves much to the imagination. Houck identifies him as "a German school teacher" who arrived in 1800 with his two sons Michael and Fred Jr. An old Whitewater church history is a bit more specific, claiming that in 1800 he came "to this community and taught a subscription school." That suggests he taught English reading and writing skills to neighboring German-speaking farm youth, as he apparently had done earlier in North Carolina and possibly even in Pennsylvania. The best evidence is the vague testimony of George F. Bollinger, who told land commis-

sioners in 1806 that Fred was a “schoolmaster.” As noted earlier, Fred could not have settled permanently in Upper Louisiana before 1803, so the 1800 dates mentioned in these accounts were meant to be approximate, not precise. An 1806 deed mentions a “school house” near the property line of Fred Jr.—most likely the school where his father taught.⁴⁶

Despite the clearing and cultivating that witnesses swore was underway on the Whitewater and elsewhere long before the U.S. takeover, real growth had to await a definitive settlement of the land title controversy. Small farmers could gamble on raising a quick crop or two without a clear title, but few risked substantive improvements on land that suddenly could be taken away by another claimant with a certified deed in his pocket from some government land agency. Amos Stoddard, the civil administrator in St. Louis, tried to assure anxious settlers and speculators alike in a proclamation issued a week after his arrival: “[T]his much I will venture to affirm, that the most ample justice will be done, and that in the final adjustment of claims no settler or landholder will have just cause to complain.”⁴⁷

Stoddard’s statement was more platitude than promise, and even then it took thirty years to fulfill. Two weeks after his proclamation, Congress and the president, under pressure from the free soil farmers and representatives in the North, tossed a bombshell with new legislation, effective 1 October 1804, dividing Louisiana at the 33rd parallel. North of that line, the new District of Louisiana was to become a subordinate unit of Indiana Territory under control of its governor, William Henry Harrison. This was ominous to all slaveholders, for Indiana fell under the ban on slavery imposed by the Northwest Ordinance. Even worse for those holding Spanish land grants or concessions was a provision in the new law voiding all claims after 1 October 1800, the date Spain transferred Louisiana back to France. Anyone who tried to settle without a full title was subject to a \$1,000 fine and a year’s imprisonment.⁴⁸

A slaveowner himself, Jefferson had a romantic humanitarian vision, like many of the southern elite before the 1820s. Humanitarians North and South wanted to end both slavery and the expansion of

slavery. Romantics sympathized with the plight of Native Americans, whose lands were rapidly disappearing as white expansionists marched westward. Neither slave nor Indian had any recognized constitutional rights before the 1860s, but justice and equality remained more than just a promise to the author of the Declaration of Independence. Signing the new law banning slavery and voiding Spanish claims west of the Mississippi coincided with the two parts of Jefferson's reform vision: slave emancipation and Indian relocation. But trying to advance a progressive agenda in the West stirred fires of resentment that ultimately exploded in civil war.⁴⁹

As the deadline approached for implementing the new law, protest meetings arose in every populated district. Cape Girardeau sent four delegates—Frederick Bollinger, Stephen Byrd, Andrew Ramsay, and Stephen Byhe—to a general meeting in St. Louis, where they signed a petition to Congress on 29 September that “respectfully” insisted on their right of self-government. They also urged repeal of the odious antislavery provision, using the standard ploy of slaveowners that the climate was too hot for whites. They further argued that the ban on claims after 1800 was an *ex post facto* law that violated the U.S. Constitution.⁵⁰

While the protestors waited for relief the October deadline passed and the March law went into effect. With it came the standard instruments of American local government. Under Governor William Henry Harrison, the Indiana legislature passed a series of supplementary bills for the District of Louisiana. After dividing it into five subdivisions—the equivalent of counties—the lawmakers appointed justices of the peace, set up militia districts and defined standards of duty for all “free white” males, imposed periodic road service and fines for nonperformance, levied taxes on personal and real property, and established a court of common pleas in St. Louis to hear appeals.⁵¹

The Americanization of local government gave Frederick Limbaugh Sr. one more career opportunity. At age seventy-one he had few chances left to rise professionally. Whether by chance or by design, he had built a solid reputation among the local power elite after two years in Cape Girardeau County, by teaching school, buying land, witnessing

deeds and translating documents, and befriending the Bollingers and the Lorimiers. In 1805 they recommended him to Governor Harrison, who appointed him to the District Court of General Quarter-Sessions, along with six other judges. In the interim between sessions these jurists held court in separate districts as justices of the peace. Fred served more than a year in the Whitewater district before it became a township in 1807. His son Michael, before he moved to Illinois, served under his father and other JPs as one of five constables for the district.⁵²

Meanwhile the relief legislation that took effect on 4 July 1805 bowed to slaveholders by eliminating the antislavery provisions and organizing Upper Louisiana into a territory with its own governor, legislature, and judiciary, subject only to federal oversight. But it gave little comfort to the anxious petitioners with land claims in Upper Louisiana. Responding to rumors that many old claims were fraudulent or awarded through what might be called “crony capitalism” today, Congress took a hard line. It validated legitimate grants made before 1 October 1800, provided that adult family heads on that date were actually inhabiting and cultivating their claims. At the same time it established much higher standards of scrutiny for grants made after that date but before actual American takeover on 20 December 1803. The claimant had to have had permission to settle from the Spanish government, had to be living on and working the claim, and had to present “written evidence of his claim” by 1 March 1806 to a newly created Land Claims Commission. That three-man body would carefully examine each claim, then make a report to the secretary of the treasury, who would forward recommendations to Congress for consideration.⁵³

From first meeting to last the land commissioners worked under strained circumstances. The process was slow and laborious. The lack of documents and maps seemed an insuperable obstacle to commissioners and petitioners alike. Small-farm Republicans in the North distrusted the Spanish government holdovers in the new territories, and they criticized recommendations that seemed too sympathetic to the appeals of French and Hispanic residents with large landholdings. Statements made by friends and neighbors of the claimants could not be independently verified. Such testimony seemed calculated more

to meet congressional requirements than to establish actual facts. Even the commissioners were divided and fighting among themselves after a few months. In 1806 Jefferson, disgusted, replaced one member and put off further deliberations until Congress could revise the land laws.⁵⁴

In his second term of office Jefferson was at the height of his power and influence during the 8th and 9th Congresses. He made his expansionist views clear in frequent written messages to the lawmakers meeting in the still unfinished Capitol. The lack of progress in organizing Louisiana not only slowed growth but seemed counterintuitive to his agrarian instincts. “Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens,” he once wrote John Jay. Now that Lewis and Clark had returned with detailed accounts of the sheer size of the trans-Mississippi West and the abundance of its resources, surely the lawmakers could find room across the river for both farmers and native Americans.⁵⁵

Congress responded dutifully with two supplemental acts. The first, passed on 21 April 1806, loosened the rules of evidence and the age requirement. It allowed confirmation if settlers without documentation had lived on the land for three consecutive years before the U.S. takeover, or for ten years if they were under the age of twenty-one when first staking the claim. It also extended the time to provide evidence to 1 January 1807, allowed deputies in each county to receive documents, and even authorized commissioners themselves to travel wherever necessary to examine witnesses.

This made life easier for hard-pressed small farmers with claims under 640 acres, but even larger grants were accommodated under the second supplemental law passed on 3 March 1807. That act repealed the earlier law voiding claims before 20 December 1803 if they lacked completed titles, or were filed by minors, women, and others who were not family heads. The revision also expanded the maximum grant eligible for confirmation to 2,000 acres, extended the filing time to 1 July 1808, and gave commissioners “full powers” to confirm or deny claims based on “laws and established usages and customs of the French and Spanish governments.” Those claims that the commissioners rejected or otherwise did not confirm for other reasons were to be passed up through administrative channels for final disposition by Congress itself.⁵⁶

With these revised instructions the Board of Commissioners went back to work in St. Louis in September 1806. For the next five years the board examined more than 3,000 claims and issued certificates confirming titles for 1,342 applicants. But the large number of rejected claims raised more questions about the motives of the commissioners and the equity of the process. Rising land values and the delay in making federal lands available for sale added pressure on Congress to help agrarian interests, both North and South. Statehood for Louisiana in 1811 and reorganization of Upper Louisiana into Missouri Territory the following year advanced the democratic process but also called attention to unresolved land disputes and the adverse impact on development. In the Cape Girardeau district, the land commissioners had confirmed only 170 applications, and of those only 34 were Whitewater claims—just half of the Spanish grants made along that waterway alone. Most of the Bollingers and others whose claims dated before 1800 were accepted, but the grants made to the Limbaughs and many of their neighbors were rejected or set aside. The War of 1812 temporarily diverted the attention of Congress, but it would soon come under new pressure to loosen settlement restrictions in the West.⁵⁷

The clouded titles of many settlers in the Cape Girardeau area retarded but did not stop the community's economic and political development. Indeed, private property improvements and advances in community infrastructure after 1806 made it all the more difficult to turn away old and new claimants and squatters alike, whether on old Spanish grants or on unsurveyed federal lands. Yet the length of time it took to investigate old claims delayed the survey and sale of public lands under the grid system established by the Land Ordinance of 1785. Not until 1818 did the General Land Office (GLO) open its first Missouri branch in St. Louis, offering 160-acre minimum parcels for \$2.00 per acre. Three years later a regional office opened in Jackson, the newly designated seat of Cape Girardeau County.⁵⁸

In the Whitewater district, officially designated German Township in 1807, smaller parcels surrounding larger grant lands attracted the kinfolk of the pioneer settlers, as well as immigrants coming in from crowded lands east of the Appalachians and on both sides of the Ohio

River. Newcomers took a chance on claiming and holding land until Congress passed a bill extending the right of preemption to all persons living in Missouri territory before 1814. That gave them “squatter’s rights,” but they still had to wait and worry until May 1821, when GLO officials in Jackson announced that they would keep the local office open daily to accommodate preemption claimants “desirous of having their claims adjudicated.” Later that year the *Independent Patriot*, Jackson’s first newspaper, editorialized that squatters claiming preemption rights made up a “very large proportion of the actual settlers” in the county.⁵⁹

Immigrant infill gradually diluted the Germanic concentration along the Whitewater, but Old World language and Southern culture provided a distinctive flavor to the township right up to the Civil War. As late as 1825 the Cape Girardeau Auxiliary Bible Society was offering its patrons German bibles and testaments “of very superior quality” along with English bibles. The influx of small farmers in German Township did not dull the luster of its pioneer developer. George Frederick Bollinger gained wealth and popularity as the largest planter and slaveowner in the region. A trading center called Burfordsville grew up alongside his water-powered mill, the only one in the district. The county electorate in 1812 sent him to St. Louis as one of their representatives in the First Territorial Legislature, and in 1820 they elected him as a delegate to the Missouri Constitutional Convention. For the next twenty years he was a champion of slavery expansion and a major figure in regional politics.⁶⁰

It took nearly that long to end Missouri’s lingering land title disputes. In 1813 the Land Commission issued its “final report” under more liberal guidelines. It accepted most legitimate land claims filed before 1805. That was still not enough to satisfy thousands of settlers who could not document either receiving a concession from Spanish officials or settling before the cut-off date imposed by earlier legislation. Under renewed pressure, Congress caved to expansionists. It extended the time for filing claims and eased the requirements for documentation. Proving up a claim now could be based on the oral testimony of friends and neighbors alone. In 1814 Congress enlarged

the maximum grant size to one square league (7,065 arpents or 6,002 acres) and confirmed all “honest” grants made before U.S. purchase. Under these generous guidelines, 500 more Missouri settlers in 1816 received the welcome news that their claims had finally been validated. Among the 72 favored from Cape Girardeau County, half were from the Whitewater district, including Henry and Daniel Bollinger, John and Isaac Miller, Abraham Byrd, Christopher and J. P. Aiding, Peter Hartle, Jacob Crader’s heirs, and Frederick Limbaugh and his son Frederick Jr.⁶¹

Some claims still remained suspect, but even those found new life under Missouri Senator Thomas Hart Benton, an indefatigable expansionist and champion of squatter’s rights. By the 1830s, the idea of “land for the landless” seemed a natural extension of America’s Manifest Destiny to populate the continent with yeoman farmers. As chairman of the Committee on Private Land Claims, Senator Lewis Fields Linn, Benton’s Missouri colleague, secured legislation that confirmed all previous grant approvals and established legal procedures for a “final adjustment” of any other land disputes. That action virtually ended Missouri’s long legal battle over land titles, but it came just as thousands of Missouri farmers faced foreclosure and economic depression following the Panic of 1837. For many destitute farm families the only option was new migration, this time all the way to Oregon.⁶²

Henry Limbaugh and Descendants

The fight over land titles in Missouri was just beginning when a newcomer to the Limbaugh clan arrived. Henry Limbaugh, the fourth son of Frederick Limbaugh Sr., had stayed behind in North Carolina when his father and older brother Fred Jr. left for Missouri in 1803. Like his closest brother, Peter, three years his senior, Henry had family and friends in North Carolina.

The Carolina Background

As a typical Piedmont farmer and family man, Henry was nearly as successful as Peter. Born in Pennsylvania about 1773, Henry's career mirrored Peter's, though not at the same place and time. Henry remained in Cabarrus County after his brother moved to Burke, farming 95 acres of land he had purchased on Adams Creek. The date of this acquisition is unknown, but it may have been as early as 1799, when he was first called for jury duty—a clear sign of his rising economic and social status. His family dutifully attended St. John's Lutheran Church, which under Reverend Storch served both Lutheran and German Reformed congregations. Like Peter, Henry was rooted in Carolina by the time his father and older brother decided to move.¹

Henry had married soon after the family reached North Carolina. His first wife, Mary Hise, was from a large Carolina family whose sons

had fought for the Patriot cause during the Revolution. The Hise and Limbaugh families remained close neighbors and friends, both in the Carolina Piedmont and later in Tennessee. Peter put up security bonds for Mary's father and brother when they were involved in a Burke County lawsuit. One of Mary's cousins later married John A. Limbaugh, Peter's eldest son. Mary was a typical German farmer's wife, dutiful and fertile, but sadly her life was obscure and short. She died sometime after arriving in Missouri with her family, but no records have been found to identify the date or place. Her six children, all born in North Carolina, grew to maturity in Missouri.²

The careful work of historians and genealogists has solved most of the mysteries that long surrounded the linkage between Henry and the other Limbaughs in early Missouri. His ties to Frederick Sr. are well documented in court and land records, and thanks to the work of Mark Evans and Barbara Limbaugh Kuncl, the names and dates of his children are firmly established. There are just too many Limbaughs in the world to attempt a broad family history. My narrative covers only Henry's ancestry and the branch of his progeny that begins with Daniel R. Limbaugh, born 3 September 1801, his third—or perhaps fourth—child, depending on whether his twin brother Jacob was born before or after him. The family still lived in Cabarrus County then, but five years later Henry sold his land and moved to Burke County, near his wife's folks and his brother Peter, who had bought land there the year Daniel was born.³

Henry and his family lived in Burke County for the next four years, but their exact whereabouts are unknown. The late Noble Limbaugh scoured Burke County land records but found no evidence of Henry's presence, suggesting that he may have worked for and stayed with his father-in-law during the period. One recent book claims that they came to Missouri in 1809 but that contradicts the 1810 North Carolina census, which shows Henry living in Morganton, along with his wife, Mary, and seven children. The month and year of their arrival in Cape Girardeau are important clues to determining the fate of Henry's father, Frederick Sr., who disappears from public records after signing his name to a justice court document in Cape Girardeau on 16 March 1811.⁴

From Frederick to Henry

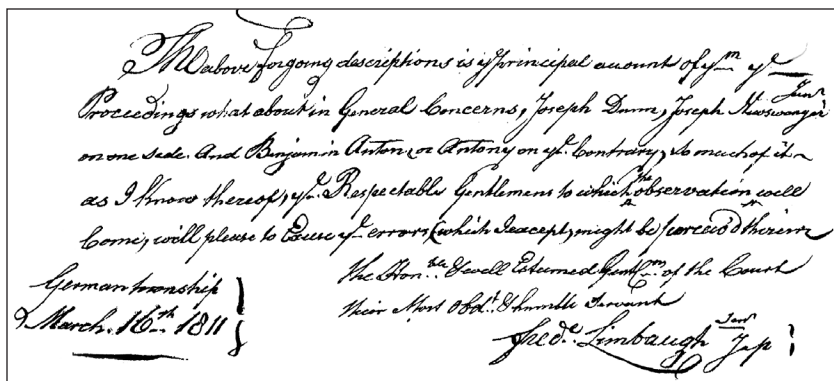
The case of *Niswonger v. Anton* involved a petty legal dispute, but to historians and genealogists it is invaluable, not only for what it shows about the internal divisions within the German community, but also for providing the first solid evidence that George Frederick Limbach, our immigrant ancestor from Hüffenhardt, Mosbach, Baden, was the same man we have followed from Germany to Pennsylvania to North Carolina, and finally to Missouri. Joseph Niswonger (Neyswanger), a deputy constable serving under Justice Limbaugh, filed a complaint in 1810 against Benjamin Anton (Antony) for “trespass, assault, Battery and false imprisonment” after Anton resisted Neyswanger’s effort to serve a warrant against Anton to appear in court for failure to pay a \$5 debt. As the trial approached, both sides sent out legal notices to gather reinforcements, revealing a deep division of opinion among longtime friends and neighbors. Anton’s attorney brought in Benjamin Shell, Phillip Bollinger, Daniel Bollinger, and Daniel Crader to testify; Neyswanger summoned the judge’s son Michael and his wife, Catharine, plus John Cotner, Daniel Martin, and Christopher Edmon (Aidinger?). Justice Limbaugh heard the case in March 1811 and filed a preliminary report on 16 March for the Court of Common Pleas. This remarkable three-page handwritten document, still crisp and legible after more than 200 years, is now preserved in the Cape Girardeau County archives at Jackson. It is signed with a distinctive flourish closely resembling Frederick’s earlier signatures from Pennsylvania and North Carolina. In stilted English, suggestive of a first-generation German immigrant, the judge lays out the background and the issues. When Anton challenged the court about the spelling of his name, Frederick, who knew the defendant personally, “answered him To with [wit], what Concerns your Name I heard Name and Call your father and brother of your father for 50 years Anton (in pennsylvania) and afterward also in N Carolina...”⁵

Whatever the ultimate disposition of this case, we hear no more of the elder Frederick Limbaugh after 16 March 1811. His abrupt departure from the historical record was so complete that in the 1930s, when his great-grandson, a young Missouri attorney named Rush Hudson

Limbaugh, was researching sources of family history in order to identify and locate the heirs of Hunter Limbaugh, a grandson of Henry, he found no evidence linking Frederick to Henry's line. Today, with better research technology, more comprehensive resources, and more time for study and reflection than Rush had eighty years ago, the linkage has been clearly established. But that still leaves two unanswered questions: what happened to Frederick, and when did his son Henry arrive in Missouri? A third question that has been asked many times is whether the New Madrid earthquake had anything to do with either of the first two?⁶

The earthquake question seems the easiest to dispose of. This great period of shaking has long been portrayed as one of the momentous events in American history, a natural singularity that altered the course of the Mississippi, at least temporarily, and certainly altered the lives of many southeast Missourians. But whatever the quakes did, they did not start until 16 December 1811, months after the goings and comings of the Limbaugh family fifty miles north at Cape Girardeau.

In 1965 Rush Limbaugh published a treatise on Missouri Territory's inheritance laws, but since he did not identify Frederick Limbaugh as a family member at that time, he did not see the irony of his great-great-grandfather's involvement with those laws, either as judge or decedent. Even if that family tie had been acknowledged in the 1960s, Missouri's frontier status and political development under three separate nations and legal traditions make it difficult to discern what laws of inheritance applied or were enforced at the time of Frederick's demise. Unlike seaboard colonies that evolved under the jurisdiction of English common law, Missouri was a French colony as part of Louisiana, then a Spanish province, then a French province again before it became a U.S. territory. Not until 1816 did the Missouri territorial legislature adopt English common law. However, in 1804 Congress made Missouri a subordinate unit of Indiana Territory, which followed the laws and practices established by the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. In October 1804 Indiana's governor Harrison and his three territorial judges, acting as a first-stage government for Missouri, wrote laws that, among other things, established probate courts and an appeal process



The summary paragraph of Justice Frederick Limbaugh Senior's 1811 analysis of *Niswonger v. Anton*, a minor case in itself but invaluable for family historians. The content, written and signed in his own hand, proves beyond doubt that Frederick is the same Limbaugh who landed at Philadelphia in 1753, migrated to North Carolina in 1787, and settled in Missouri in 1803. From *Niswonger v. Anton*, Cape Girardeau Court of Common Pleas, November term 1810, original in Box 11, File 23 of Case 533, Cape Girardeau County Archive Center, Jackson, Missouri.

Just who were Frederick's heirs? According to Evans and Kuncel, in 1811 Frederick had six adult children still living. Had Frederick been a widower and died without a will, the laws of descent and distribution would have required giving what property he had left to his nearest relatives—in this case his living adult children—in equal shares. He may have had nothing left to give. During his lifetime the laws allowed Frederick to "freely alien any of his property," and to "dispose of the same by last will." Since no will has been found, it seems safe to assume that he either sold or gave his property to relatives or friends before he died. Unfortunately, some records for this period have been lost, so it is not possible to verify this assumption.⁸

So we are now left with Frederick's disappearance and Henry's appearance. Are these two events linked? It seems obvious that they are,

especially in view of the fact that Henry claimed part of Frederick's property. Missouri territorial tax files for 1812 shows that Henry paid taxes on 225 acres of Whitewater land whose "original owner" was "Frederick Limbach senior." His brother Michael paid taxes on 500 acres of land "originally claimed by Frederick." Presumably Michael's payment relates to Survey 2219, and Henry's to adjacent lands due west of the survey that Frederick may have claimed but could not patent. From the lack of verification in General Land Office records and other documents before 1856, it is clear that Henry had only preempted the land. After the government completed the required surveys and opened the land for sale, his son Daniel was able to purchase the property.

Henry's brother Fred Jr. as well as "Christian Limbach" also appear on the same 1812 tax list. While this is not proof of inheritance, it strongly suggests that Frederick made some arrangements with his sons before he died, sometime between March and December 1811. He was at least seventy-seven years old and must have given his progeny some thought at that late stage of his long and complicated life. A letter or two would have drawn Henry and other close family members, especially if they anticipated inheriting property. Rush's reminiscences, based on family oral tradition, assert that Henry and his family arrived by wagon from North Carolina in 1811.⁹

Life in Frontier Missouri

We have reached the point in this narrative where archival research can be supplemented by personal reminiscences of the Limbaugh family. In 1973, while I was teaching at the University of the Pacific, I received a letter from a Cape Girardeau attorney interested in family history. Rush Limbaugh and my father were about the same age. They had played together as boyhood cousins growing up in Missouri. After graduating from law school, Rush took on a family assignment. His uncle, Jason Hunter Limbaugh, had died intestate in 1933. Hunter was the youngest son of Daniel R. Limbaugh, one of Henry Limbaugh's six children. Rush, as administrator, had to identify and locate Hunter's collateral descendants—all 152 of them. Much later Rush prepared a brief that describes many of these Missouri Limbaughs. From Rush's

papers and other sources we can reconstruct a fairly reliable picture of Henry Limbaugh, his children, and his times. As a historian, I say “fairly” to caution readers against relying too heavily on personal memory for factual accuracy. One of my colleagues once pointed out that fallacy by citing a public speaker who said he “didn’t want the facts to stand in the way of a good story.”¹⁰

Providing for his family was Henry’s first task upon reaching Missouri. His first wife, Mary, died soon after their arrival, leaving him a widower with six young children. If mates were available, single parenthood in those days was not only an economic disadvantage but a cultural taboo. Sometime after 1816 Henry married a friend and neighbor, Catherine Mull. She was the widow of Michael Shell, a Carolina immigrant whose father had arrived in America in the 1740s. The Shells and Limbaughs were intertwined for several generations.¹¹

Rush Limbaugh said his great-grandfather Henry settled on Little Muddy Creek in the Whitewater district because better sites elsewhere were already taken. He must have squatted on land adjacent to the northwestern boundary of Survey 2219, which his brother Michael had inherited from their father Frederick. In 1827 Michael split Survey 2219 into two parcels of 320 acres each. He sold one to Henry and the other to the heirs of James Johnson Sr., another North Carolina immigrant from Lincoln County who arrived in Missouri about the same time as Henry but died soon afterward. The division line was never precisely described in land records, but we know its approximate location. Following U.S. General Land Office survey gridlines on a north–south trajectory, it was close to the boundary separating township ranges 10E and 11E (later the line between Cape Girardeau and Bollinger Counties).¹²

These 1827 land transactions reinforce, but do not prove, the assertion that Michael inherited Survey 2219 but let others farm it when he left for Illinois. They also indicate that Henry was thinking ahead. By the mid-1820s Missouri was booming. Upriver farmers found a ready market in New Orleans for pig lead, corn, cane sugar, flour, salt pork, lard, and other products they could sent downriver on flatboats. The long national dispute over slavery expansion had temporarily ended

with a compromise by which Missouri joined the Union in 1821 as a slave state, balanced by Maine's admission as a free state the same year. After public land sales began in 1818, newcomers flocked in to purchase 160-acre parcels on credit for a minimum price of \$2 per acre. The resulting infill raised land prices and doubtless added urgency to Henry's plans, although his primary motivation remains a mystery. He may have felt an urge to take legal title to part of his father's property. Maybe he wanted only to expand his cropland and help his family. Perhaps, like many southern yeoman farmers in the antebellum South, he wanted to join the ranks of plantation owners, following the lead of his neighbor George F. Bollinger, the pioneer patriarch who left a large estate and thirty-five slaves at his death in 1842.¹³

If Henry had planter ambitions, he did not live long enough to fulfill them. He died in 1833, leaving a modest estate and a will filed two weeks earlier. To his son Jacob, the twin brother of Daniel, he gave 80 acres of "the plantation I now live on." The reference is vague, but after Jacob died his estate administrators confirmed that the land was part of the 320 acres Henry had purchased from Michael in Survey 2219. Just before Henry died he sold another 80-acre parcel to a third party. Rush believed that Henry had built his home on bottom land just west of the creek. During his lifetime, however, he may have built simple log cabins on several tracts, so without better documentation it is not possible to pin down his last location. The "balance of his plantation"—i.e., the remainder of his share of Survey 2219—Henry left to his youngest son, William Madison Limbaugh, "provided" he took care of his stepmother and unmarried older sister, both named Catherine. Henry's personal property, sold at public auction, netted a total of \$209.69. The inventory shows that his "plantation" was mostly a cattle ranch, where he had raised hogs, sheep, heifers, and a few horses.¹⁴

Three of Henry's children were not named in the will. His youngest daughter Sophia had a family of her own. She married Jonathan Kinder, a young farmer from a large and prosperous North Carolina family with extensive land holdings in Cape Girardeau County. Henry's eldest, George Frederick III, known as George F., was about thirteen years old when his father came to Missouri. When he was old enough

to farm on his own he moved a mile up Little Muddy Creek, perhaps squatting on land his grandfather Frederick had claimed but not confirmed during the Spanish era. In 1830 George married Katherine Edinger (Aidinger), whose family had arrived in Missouri from the Carolina Piedmont along with the rest of the Bollinger trekkers nearly thirty years before. She died after their third child, leaving George a widower with considerable land holdings. He was nearly fifty-four when he remarried, this time to Catherine Elisabeth Cook, the daughter of still another Carolina Piedmont immigrant farm family headed by George Benjamin Cook Sr.¹⁵

George F. Limbaugh's second marriage added one more twist to the web of relationships among these clannish German-Americans. George Cook's wife, Anna, was the daughter of Henry's brother, Fred Jr. In 1828 Fred sold 50 acres of his remaining holdings to his new son-in-law. For the next ten years George and Anna worked hard to earn a living on their land. But the Panic of 1837 hit hard in Missouri, and small farmers like George Cook barely survived. He had to put all his property on the line to borrow \$500 from the Bollingers. The chattel mortgage he signed provides a window into the sparse material lives of these marginal farmers. His most valued personal property amounted to "ten head of sheep, four head of horses, seven head of cattle, seven head of hogs, one windmill, two rifle guns, and all his farming utensils and household and kitchen furniture."¹⁶

Daniel Limbaugh and His Legacy

We come at last to Daniel R. Limbaugh, Henry's second or third son, depending on when his twin brother Jacob was born. Daniel's middle name remains a mystery—just one of several that make him one of the most intriguing ancestors of the Limbaugh family. His grandfather Frederick Sr. had been known as a schoolteacher, but he disappeared about the time ten-year-old Daniel arrived from North Carolina, so his education was rudimentary at best. Public schools in Missouri were not started until the 1830s, and before that the few private schools available were too expensive and too far away for immigrant farm boys from the Carolinas. Like most farmers Daniel learned by doing.¹⁷

Table 5 Direct Descendants of Johann Michael Lymbach

1	Johann Michael Lymbach b. 1680, Rheinsberg, Schwäbisch Hall, Württemberg d. Abt 1730, Reingsberg + Anna Catharina Wagner d. 27 April 1743, Hüffenhardt, Baden
2	Johannes Lymbach/Limbach b. 20 June 1708, Hüffenhardt, Mosbach, Baden d. 12 Aug. 1769, Upper Milford, Northampton Co., Pennsylvania + Maria Margaretha Listerer b. Abt. 1706, Gochsheim, Baden d. 29 July 1774, Upper Milford, Northampton Co., Pennsylvania
3	George Frederick Lymbach/Limbach/Limbaugh b. 14 Oct. 1734, Hüffenhardt, Mosbach, Baden d. Abt. 1811 + Anna Catharina Ritter b. Bet. 1737 and 1738, Lower Milford Township, Northampton Co., Pennsylvania
4	George Frederick Limbaugh b. 23 Oct. 1761, Upper Milford Township, Northampton Co., Pennsylvania d. 1837, Missouri + Barbara Crader d. Bet. 1822 and 1824, Missouri
5	Anna Limbaugh b. 1797, North Carolina d. 1876, Madison County, Missouri + George Benjamin Cook b. 1786, North Carolina d. Bet. 1860 and 1870, Missouri
6	[2] George Benjamin Cook b. 8 Aug. 1826, Missouri d. 2 April 1899, Missouri + [1] Luraney Limbaugh b. 19 Aug. 1824, Missouri d. 4 Nov. 1901, Missouri
7	[4] Mary Catherine Cook b. 1 Nov. 1852, Marquand, Madison Co., Missouri d. 1906, Oregon + [3] John W. Limbaugh b. 29 March 1852, Sedgewickville, Bollinger Co., Missouri d. 27 Sept. 1944, Marion Co., Oregon
8	John Hadley Limbaugh b. 11 May 1893, Sedgewickville, Bollinger Co., Missouri d. 20 June 1960, Caldwell, Canyon Co., Idaho
4	Henry Limbaugh b. Abt 1773, Pennsylvania d. June 1833, Cape Girardeau Co., Missouri + Catherine Mull b. 16 Jan. 1774, Lincoln Co., North Carolina d. Abt. 10 Oct. 1856, Missouri + Mary Hise b. Abt. 1777
5	Daniel R. Limbaugh b. 3 Sept. 1801, North Carolina d. 5 Sept. 1862, Bollinger Co., Missouri + Hanna Elizabeth Statler b. Abt. 1805 d. 1843
6	[1] Luraney Limbaugh b. 19 Aug. 1824, Missouri d. 4 Nov. 1901 [2] George Benjamin Cook b. 8 Aug. 1826, Missouri d. 2 April 1899 + Delilah Shell b. 29 March 1812, Missouri d. 2 Jan. 1896, German Township, Bollinger Co., Missouri
6	John P. Limbaugh b. 1836, Missouri d. 22 Feb. 1891, Missouri + Elizabeth Killian b. Abt. 1834, Missouri d. Abt. 1921, Missouri
7	[3] John W. Limbaugh d. 29 March 1852, Sedgewickville, Bollinger Co., Missouri d. 27 Sept. 1944, Marion Co., Oregon + [4] Mary Catherine Cook b. 1 Nov. 1852, Marquand, Madison Co., Missouri d. 1906, Oregon

Judging from his later acquisitions, Daniel was an ambitious lad who learned early in life that good land was a key to wealth in a farming country. He must also have been impatient, and perhaps aggressive as well. We can only imagine the character traits that animated him, but it is evident from his adult reputation as a fighter and his dubious relations with family members that he was not easy to live with. His contumacious personality may explain why he was not mentioned in Henry's will.

Daniel's first wife may have been the cause of a family dispute. She has never been fully identified. Rush believed she was a Statler but did not know her first name. Peter, Conrad, and Adam Statler held large Spanish grants in the township just five miles northwest of Survey 2219 land of Frederick Sr. They had arrived with the Bollinger party in 1799. Daniel's uncle Frederick (Jr.) had married into the Statler family after his first wife Barbara (Crader) died in 1822 or 1823. Some researchers have claimed that Daniel married Hanna Elizabeth Statler in 1827, showing as evidence a document now in the Cape Girardeau County archives. Written by Reverend Samuel Whybark in cursive English with a dose of German script, it certifies that he had "joined in wedlock" two persons. Unmistakably, the bride's name on the document is "Elizabeth Stadler," but we can only be sure of the groom's first name, "Daniel." Even if this turns out not to be Daniel Limbaugh, at least we know that his first wife, whatever her name, was the mother of Daniel's first three children, Luraney (1824), Thomas Jefferson Wilson (1826), and James Bennett (1828).¹⁸

A quick word about these siblings will have to suffice. Luraney stayed close to home and never wandered far from her roots. In 1849 she married her first cousin, George Benjamin Cook Jr., the son of George and Anna (Limbaugh) Cook. We introduced them earlier. Two of their children eventually followed the same pattern, marrying their cousins, two Limbaugh brothers—as we will see later. James Bennett followed the gold rush in 1849, found a wife from Canada and raised a large family whose descendants are now scattered throughout the Central Valley of California. The middle child, Jefferson W. as he was called, left the rural life and achieved some fame as an an-

tebellum newspaper editor and publisher in Jackson. Only a few copies of the *Southern Democrat* are extant, but he made his politics clear in the masthead motto: "The Constitution in its purity—the bulwark of American liberty." By that he meant the original Constitution, unchanged by later amendments against slavery. His opposition to any federal intervention "in the unfortunate slavery controversy" made his paper a force to be reckoned with in Missouri politics. In 1851 it helped turn the state legislature against the reelection of venerable Senator Thomas Hart Benton, who opposed slavery expansion. Unfortunately for Jeff Limbaugh, a cholera epidemic passed through town and took him with it in 1852.¹⁹

How long Daniel was married to his first wife—or whether he was in a common-law relationship instead of a marriage—has long been one of the mysteries that are associated with him. It would not have been a good subject of conversation in his presence. Violence, whether organized or individualistic, was widespread in antebellum southern society. Slavery made violence part of everyday life. Keeping alert to possible slave revolts made southern whites armed and dangerous. Whether or not they owned slaves, they identified with a cavalier spirit of vigilance and self-protection. According to Limbaugh family tradition, Daniel embodied these southern fighting values. He never lost a fistfight and would "fight at the drop of a hat," as Rush remembered his mother telling him.²⁰

Sometime in the late 1820s or early 1830s Daniel's first wife died. Her dates are as uncertain as her name. She rests in an unmarked grave somewhere, perhaps in the family cemetery, but no records were kept of the burials and the cemetery lay in neglect for decades before it was restored. In 1842 Daniel married Delilah Shell. They had been cohabitating for years before the wedding and had at least five children out of wedlock. Violating the sanctity of marriage may have carried unwelcome social consequences in eastern urban centers, but living together without a license and raising a family in rural Missouri was less a stigma than a potential legal problem. Unwed mothers and illegitimate children had few legal rights. To avoid any unpleasant consequences Delilah treated all of Daniel's children as her own, and he treated her

as one of the family. After a few years nobody outside the immediate family seemed to know the difference.²¹

Delilah's five-year-old grandson Rush remembered "Granny Limbaugh" as a tall, quiet woman in a long black dress living alone in the house Daniel had built. She had been a widow for forty years when Rush knew her. But as a young mother in a remote area within a border state, she was both assertive and protective in the turbulent years just before the Civil War. Missouri was bitterly divided over pro- and anti-slave factions, and had been since the statehood fight thirty years before. As early as 1819 the northern press reported that a "mob of slave-holders" in Cape Girardeau County had broken up a Methodist camp meeting led by northern preachers. Though the first Missouri Limbaughs were proslavery Democrats, Delilah remained faithful to the northern Methodist Episcopal Church after the Southern Methodists split off. She was proud of her father's record as a revolutionary Patriot who fought the British at the Battle of King's Mountain. Uneducated but as strong-willed as her husband, she made sure that her children remembered the Shell family's patriotic heritage. That was an important lesson when the war came and families in southeast Missouri had to choose sides.²²

In the 1830s Delilah's Unionist views would not have stirred controversy among Henry Limbaugh's children. Their heroes were Thomas Hart Benton and Andrew Jackson, both slaveowners and strong Unionists themselves. Benton's unpopularity among southern Democrats surfaced only after the Mexican War, when his party split over the question of slavery expansion. Jackson had died earlier, but as president he threatened to use force against South Carolina unless it stopped trying to "nullify" acts of Congress it didn't like. He also didn't like big banks and their political backers in the Whig party. Jacksonian Democrats distrusted the "moneyed interests" of the industrial Northeast, with all their wealth, power, and political influence. In Missouri, as in other frontier states and territories, wealthy speculators borrowed money from the Whig-dominated Bank of the United States to buy up large tracts of land, causing inflation and hurting small farmers. Jackson put a stop to that in 1837 with his "Species Circular," requiring

land payments in gold or silver instead of paper money. The circular “killed” the Bank of the United States, but it also caused an economic depression that crippled the nation’s economy for the next five years. Missouri farmers suffered badly from the effects of depression. Many lost their mortgaged farms as markets withered and creditors called in their loans. We have already seen its impact on George Benjamin Cook, who married Anna, one of Daniel’s aunts.²³

Another depression victim was Michael L. Limbaugh, the grandson of Frederick Jr., who in 1825 had sold the 450 acres in Survey 2220 to Michael’s father, Jacob. But Jacob, Fred’s only son, died intestate two years later. Since there was no will, the laws of Missouri governed the disposition of Jacob’s property, and the courts determined the custody of his surviving children. The survivors received an equal share—in this case one-seventh—of Jacob’s estate. Jacob’s widow Mary (Shell), the older sister of Daniel’s wife Delilah, had little say in these matters—a reflection of the dependent role of women in 19th-century America. In March 1834, when Michael turned fourteen, his older brother William was appointed his guardian in place of John Statler. In September of that year, Michael’s sister Catherine, age seventeen, chose her uncle, Henry Shell, as her guardian. Only Frederick, a year older than Michael, chose to stay with his mother.²⁴

William was perhaps not the best choice for guardian. Michael was only sixteen when he married, and still sixteen when his first child was born. His fourteen-year-old wife, Mary (Simmons), was an apparent newcomer to the German community along the Whitewater. They were already in debt by the time their second child was born in 1838. In the fall of that year Michael mortgaged his share of his father’s estate for a \$33 loan payable in one year at 10 percent interest. When he failed to pay, the lender foreclosed.²⁵

Daniel Limbaugh and his brother George also felt the depression’s impact, but in different ways. In 1838 Cape Girardeau Whig leaders assumed that George, as a large landowner, was sympathetic to their cause. They tried to add his name to a political endorsement without his knowledge, but he wrote an open letter to the editor of *The Southern Advocate* in Jackson—a predecessor of Jeff Limbaugh’s *Southern Demo-*

crat—denouncing the ruse.²⁶ Daniel's troubles were thus both financial and personal, but it is difficult to determine which troubled him the most. In 1838 he turned to his more prosperous brother for help. George made a deal, but it was less than generous. He loaned Daniel \$34.50, payable in two years at 10 percent interest and secured by a chattel mortgage on his personal property.

Four years later Daniel borrowed \$200, this time from his brother Jacob and on even steeper terms. His chattel mortgage included two "fillies three years old this spring," a "yearling colt ... two yoke of work steers, three cows and calves, four yearling calves, and 16 sheep." It was also secured by land on Little Whitewater "where ... [he] now resides," and a preemption right on its water. That was three miles southwest of Survey 2219, close to the Survey 2220 land of his uncle Fred Jr. Rush later believed that Daniel had always lived on Henry's farmstead on Little Muddy Creek, but Daniel could not preempt land or water without actually living where he claimed the rights.²⁷

In between these two loans Daniel and his nephew, Michael L. Limbaugh, got into a fight over money. It was late in 1840, eight months after Michael and Mary Limbaugh had lost their home in a sheriff's sale. Michael had either asked his uncle for a loan, or had borrowed money he refused to pay back. During an argument Michael threw a "stone" that knocked Daniel down. The injury was severe enough that Daniel filed a complaint, and the county grand jury indicted Michael for assault with intent to kill. The case lingered on for years, straining family relations and dividing the Whitewater community. A year after the circuit court judge issued a warrant for Michael's arrest, he appeared at a preliminary hearing with a surety, Joshua Whybark, the son of the pioneer preacher and the husband of Michael's Aunt Mary. Michael was released on Whybark's bond, and attorneys for both sides gathered reinforcements for a court fight. The list of subpoenaed witnesses contained friends and family members, old timers and newcomers, prominent citizens and plain folk, twenty-nine in all, a cross-section of the community and a testament to the values it placed on character and personal integrity. The jury sided with the victim despite his fighting reputation. It found Michael guilty as charged,

but the judge was lenient. He fined Michael \$10 and court costs. The convicted felon disappeared before the county could collect and was never heard of again.²⁸

Daniel's fortunes changed with the return of prosperity in the mid-1840s. Instead of borrowing money he now could lend some. Late in 1843 he joined three neighbors as sureties to post a \$1,000 bond on behalf of Mary Cook, administrator for the estate of her late husband, Jacob Cook. A relative—probably a brother—of George B. Cook, Jacob had left more debts than assets after his death in 1837. Mary had ignored the creditor's bill for \$19 until he filed a complaint and obtained a judgment. Insolvency was a serious offense before debtor's laws were liberalized. In 1830, as historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr. noted, "five sixths of the persons in the jails of New England and the Middle states were debtors, most of them owing less than twenty dollars." Mary escaped prison, but the magistrate at Cape Girardeau who heard her case took a hard line. He ordered the sheriff to sell everything she had, and when that wasn't enough to pay both creditor and court costs he issued another judgment against her bondsmen.²⁹

The bad news reached Daniel Limbaugh on his farm nearly two months later. Instead of paying the \$19 judgment against him, he hired a lawyer and filed a querulous appeal. It claimed that he was not informed of the proceedings early enough, did not know he was an important witness, lived fifty to sixty miles from court, and, since his attorney was also unable to be present, did not have proper counsel. The judge was unimpressed. He rejected the motion and ordered the surly bondsman to pay the judgment, plus damages and court costs.³⁰

Daniel's pride may have been wounded, but the damage was nothing compared with the stabbing his twin brother received during a fight five months later. The assailant was indicted by the grand jury for assault with intent to kill. No disposition of the case has been found, but Jacob's wound was a harbinger of his brother's fate. Jacob died intestate in 1850, leaving a grieving family and a pile of debts his small estate could not pay. One of the administrators was John P. Edinger, another Bollinger trekker from North Carolina. The Edinger grant was a mile and a half south of Survey 2219. With the probate court's

permission he sold Jacob's 80-acre inheritance to his brother administrator, declaring that there was "not sufficient potential [personal] estate to satisfy the debts [of] said deceased." The sale smacks of nepotism, but nobody seemed to complain for two good reasons: The land sold for \$150, "more than the appraised value of said land," and the administrator's brother was George H. Edinger, the husband of Henry Limbaugh's granddaughter Matilda (McCarty).³¹

The death of Jacob and the disposal of his estate may have brought Daniel literally closer to his younger brother, William Madison Limbaugh, who had inherited legal title to the remainder of Henry's land in Survey 2219. Whatever the cause, in 1854 Daniel moved back to Little Muddy Creek, settling on land along the western boundary of the survey line that his father had preempted years before. At the time, William and his family apparently lived east of the line. Rush remembered that Daniel's son, named William Madison after Daniel's brother, lived fifteen miles west and worked a "farm near Bessville." His uncle William may have been too ill to work his own inherited land himself. The 1850 Census has the family residing next door to James Johnson, who owned half of Survey 2219, and very near William M. Limbaugh's brothers Jacob, George, and Daniel, all of whom had separate households. William's widow later said they had some 300 acres, one-third "under cultivation." He died in 1857, leaving his thirty-eight-year-old widow Elizabeth and her five children to farm the place, probably with the help of Daniel and several of his grown sons. Before the Civil War, Elizabeth's oldest daughter, Lorena, married a first cousin, Francis M., the son of William and Daniel's brother Jacob. Elizabeth and the rest of her flock remained on the same place at least until the Civil War.³²

Returning to Henry's farmstead required a new house. Even if it still stood, Henry's old pioneer cabin beside Little Muddy Creek would not have been suitable. In the fall of 1854 Daniel began construction at a new site on a hill above his father's place. Rush recalled that it was a "large log house" with two square cabins separated by an enclosed area in the middle and a roof covering the whole structure. A picture of it appears on the Limbaugh family website—at least what was left of one cabin in 1927. According to Houck, Carolina settlers in Missouri often

built this type of structure. Split logs or “puncheons,” flat on the upside, covered the cabin floors, and large slabs of lumber supported on poles protected the clapboard roof. A dirt floor in the middle offered some relief from the summer heat. In winter a big rock or stone fireplace in one cabin provided both heating and cooking, and clay pressed in the gaps between the log walls kept out the cold.³³

After Congress passed a general preemption law in 1841, squatter’s rights were transferrable but could be exercised only once. In 1855 the county circuit court held a hearing to verify that Daniel had not double-dipped. He was cleared by favorable testimony from his son-in-law, Philip Killian, married to Daniel and Delilah’s oldest daughter, Catherine. Describing Daniel’s efforts to improve the claim, Philip added construction details that could only come from an eyewitness. He said the dwelling was “16 by 18 feet square,” with a “clapboard roof, plank floor, stick & clay chimney with fire place, one door with shutter, one window with shutter, and is chinked and daubed.” Along with the house Daniel also built “two stables, cleared and fenced about five acres which he has in cultivation the present season—having planted it with corn the past spring also, enclosed said dwelling house with fence and erected a smoke house.” With construction completed in February 1855, Daniel and his family moved in and “made the same his home ever since to the present date.”³⁴

Validating his preemption claim gave Daniel priority over speculators, who often rushed in to place bids on new tracts as soon as they had been properly surveyed and opened for sale by the General Land Office. By the mid-1850s almost all the public lands in Missouri had been surveyed and opened for settlement. To protect his improvements and his father’s legacy, Daniel began buying land directly from the government. By this time the minimum price to actual settlers was \$1.25 per acre—a fixed amount set by Congress when Senator Benton was at the height of his influence. He had championed the small farmer, which explained his popularity in the West before that section was torn apart by the politics of slavery. Daniel’s first purchase was naturally the homestead where he lived, and where his father had “squatted” before him. After GLO surveyors completed the grid, the first tract had been



Figure 12 John P. Limbaugh

Born in 1836, John P. Limbaugh sat for this tintype sometime in the 1870s. It is the oldest identified photograph known of any son of Daniel R. Limbaugh. A farmer and land speculator, John P. bought and sold land in the Whitewater district. At his death in 1891 his will bequeathed the remainder of his real property in trust to his youngest son, George, who later sold it to his uncle Joseph and went to medical school.

cut down to 36 acres in Section 12 of Township 32 North, Range 10E of Missouri's prime meridian. He received his patent on June 16, 1856. Three months later patents arrived for three adjacent tracts west and south of the home place. He bought another 40 acres in 1857, and 80 acres in 1858—a total of 298 acres for the bargain price of \$372.66.³⁵

This was a lot of land to farm in the 1850s using draft animals and hand tools. Most of it was ranchland, where cattle grazed and hogs fattened on grubs and nuts. Clearing the bottomland to raise corn and grain was hard on the hands and back, but Daniel had help. All but two of Delilah and Daniel's eleven biological children lived and died near where they were born. Like their neighbors they learned the farmer's trade early, and most followed in their father's footsteps after they were grown. Without money or education there was little choice. William Madison (1832–1905), John P. (1836–1891), Joseph Headley (1844–1898), and Jason Hunter (1857–1933) were all farmers, some more prosperous than others. Only Henry H. (1838–ca. 1883) and Nathaniel Pinkston or "Pink" (1846–?) left home to seek their fortunes elsewhere. Henry found a wife in California and raised a family in the Fresno area. Too young for the Gold Rush, Pink worked his way across the West in stages as laborer, teamster, and gold miner. His last known job was constable in a small northern California town. Catherine (ca. 1834–?), Morgania (1841–ca. 1910), Rachael (1850–?) and Sarah (1853–1930) married Missouri farmers and raised large families. Catherine married into the Killian family, neighbors from the Carolinas. Sarah's husband was a distant cousin, John Mully Limbaugh.³⁶

Morgania's husband had previous Limbaugh ties. Jacob H. Delph (1830–1908) was born in the same farmhouse he lived in all his life, and was buried in a coffin he had made for himself. His mother, Leah (Shell) Delph, was the daughter of Michael Shell and Catherine Mull. As we noted earlier, after Michael's death Leah's mother married Henry Limbaugh, and Henry's son Daniel married Leah's older sister Delilah. Jake and Morgania thus shared a common grandmother, although she was not the mother of Henry's children.³⁷

From Good Years to Bad

Daniel did not have much time to enjoy his new prosperity. Guerrilla war broke out on Missouri's western flank six years before the Civil War started. The fighting began in Kansas territory, where pro- and anti-slavery forces gathered in defense of their "rights," preferring to fight rather than compromise. As the crisis escalated, Missouri lay directly in the path of armed men from both northern and southern states rushing in to support one side or the other. Missourians were deeply divided when Confederate cannon fired the first shot at Fort Sumter. Though Missouri's infamous "border ruffians" came generally from the western counties, guerrilla bands crisscrossed the state, marauding at will and leaving havoc in their wake.³⁸

To hold Missouri for the Union, the War Department sent a division of federal troops through the southern counties in 1861, hunting for "Secesh." They encamped in Jackson, and "soon a system of wholesale plunder commenced," one indignant local observer reported. Free-soil invaders felt little remorse after raiding southern homes, stores, and farms for rations to supplement their meager field provisions. "Many flourishing towns in Southeast Missouri were practically depopulated" by roving bands of foragers, according to one regional historian. Later in the war a Confederate cavalry regiment foraged out of necessity as it passed through Bollinger County—created in 1851 from parts of Cape Girardeau, Madison, Stoddard, and Wayne Counties. A stronger northern unit met them near Dallas, the county seat (later renamed Marble Hill). After a brief skirmish the southerners retreated, doubtless to the relief of local residents.³⁹

Aside from the physical devastation, the war had a destructive emotional impact. It ruined families as well as property, especially in the border states. At least twenty men with Limbaugh surnames joined in the fighting, mostly on the Confederate side. Twelve were Tennessee volunteers, descendants of Daniel's uncle Peter. Missouri Limbaughs were about equally divided. Three sons of Daniel's brother Jacob joined the Union side in the Missouri Militia, and a fourth evidently fought for the Confederates in the 8th Regiment of Missouri Cavalry. Daniel's alienated cousin, Michael Limbaugh, also had sons on both sides. Two other Missouri Limbaughs died in the war, but not in battle. John Tilman [Thomas?] Limbaugh's life ended in a Union prison in Ohio, and Union soldier Albert Tillotson Limbaugh, the son of Daniel's brother William, died from an infected leg in a federal hospital in St. Louis.⁴⁰

Daniel was not available to welcome his relatives back from the war. He died in the fall of 1862, stabbed to death in a fight. It was not directly war-related, but must be considered in the context of Missouri's violent past. The circumstances that led to his murder have never been satisfactorily explained, and after 150 years probably never will be. The first version I heard came from Daniel's great-granddaughter, Virgie (Limbaugh) Schoening. In the 1930s she stood at the gate to Daniel's log house with her cousin Lily, Rush's older sister, who pointed to the ground and said, "This is where he was murdered." In that telling, Daniel boarded a schoolteacher over the winter, but after school closed next spring the teacher "couldn't pay his board bill," so Daniel kept his trunk. "I got the idea that my great-grandfather was kinda irritable," Virgie said. When the teacher returned later a "heated argument" ensued, and Daniel was killed. "I don't know whether he was stabbed or shot," she admitted. "He kept the trunk but he lost his life."⁴¹

The version Rush told me later differs in some details, but is probably more accurate because it came directly from his mother. She blamed the incident on a fight between the schoolteacher and her son Joseph Headley—Rush's father—who was seventeen at the time and walking home from school with the teacher. They "engaged in a fierce fist and

skull fight” that “was so bitter and bloody that after the fight the teacher refused to go home.” Knowing Daniel’s reputation for fighting, he went to Millersville instead, had a blacksmith make him a dagger—and presumably a sheath to conceal it—and came back to the Limbaugh home next day to get his clothes. When Daniel refused, a brawl began that ended tragically.⁴²

Family stories invariably change as they are told and retold over the years. One embellishment of Daniel’s murder has him shot for “fooling around with another man’s wife.” This is probably a confusion of the story Rush’s mother told him about the schoolteacher “keeping company with the daughter of another Limbaugh in the area.” The girl ran away later and married the killer. Virgie imagined after the killing that “maybe that schoolteacher was hid around somewhere behind some trees, laughing because they couldn’t find him.” Rush was more cautious. He knew the teacher’s name but never mentioned it. In the early 1930s a man from St. Louis who had married a Limbaugh girl contacted Rush and invited him to visit. Rush “wrote him rather bluntly and asked him if it was his father who murdered my grandfather.” He “never heard from him again.”⁴³

Daniel’s estate took three years to settle. Early in 1864 court-appointed administrators inventoried and sold his personal property. The watches, saddles, farm equipment, livestock—including a prized sorrel mare—brought a total at auction of \$531.21. His widow, Delilah, had dower rights to his house, and his land was distributed in equal shares to his ten living children. After the Civil War Joseph began consolidating the homestead by acquiring the distributed shares from his siblings. For the next thirty years Joseph bought, sold, and perhaps traded, property in Sections 12 and 13 of Township 32N, Range 10E, later named Scopus. The deedbooks show that Daniel’s inheritance included nearly all the land within Survey 2219 to the boundary between Bollinger and Cape Girardeau Counties. By the time of his death in 1898 Joseph had cut down his holdings to Henry and Daniel’s original 300 acres, plus 160 acres west of the homestead that his brother John had acquired earlier.

Henry Limbaugh and the first two generations after him spanned Missouri's formative years, from the founding of the territory in 1812 to the end of the 19th century. For half that period the slavery question engulfed Missouri politics and retarded its social development. During the Civil War Henry's family was a microcosm of the national tragedy foreseen by Abe Lincoln in 1858: a house divided against itself that cannot stand. Even the death of Henry's son Daniel, though intensely personal, reflected the unpredictable violence of the antebellum South. After the war Missouri followed a less disruptive path to prosperity. Most of Henry's grandchildren returned to the pitchfork and plow, resuming the farming tradition on the same land he and his brothers first settled and cleared. By the late 19th century, however, a period of decline set in for midwestern farmers. They were caught in a downward cycle of overproduction, falling commodity prices, and rising transportation costs. While some Limbaughs consolidated their holdings and hunkered down to wait for better times, others decided to take advantage of new lands opening farther west.

Convergence in the Heartland, 1810–1875

Earlier chapters followed the first generation of the immigrant Limbaugh and Mortimore families from their European origins to their first homes on the fringes of settlement in the New World. As we saw in the previous chapter, the Limbaughs were first to enter the Trans-Mississippi West, crossing the great heartland river as early as 1800. This chapter introduces three new families that converge in Missouri and Kansas, associating, and at times merging, with either the Mortimores or the Limbaughs. Together or separately, branches of all these families eventually continue the western trek. By the time they reached Oregon they were closely intertwined.

The Coward and Evans Families

The Limbaughs learned of new lands farther west not only from farm newspapers but also from family and friends. One of their friends in Missouri was a neighbor girl, Susanna Elizabeth “Lizzie” Coward Evans. The fifth of thirteen children born to David Soloman Coward and his wife Mary Ann (Hazelwood), Lizzie was an orphan by the time she met the Limbaughs.

After the American Revolution several Coward/Cowherd farm families had migrated from North Carolina to eastern Tennessee, following the path of many other migrants pursuing new lands and op-

portunities farther west. In the 1820s David and Mary Ann settled on a small acreage near Knoxville.

For the next thirty years they worked, often side-by-side, raising crops to feed and clothe a growing family. But religion, politics, and slavery all converged in the 1850s, displacing many upland farmers like the Cowards. Unlike the high-church aristocrats of the Plantation South, most small farmers in East Tennessee were nonslaveholding evangelical Christians and Unionists. They hated slavery and the planter elite, but as disunion threatened they came under increasing pressure from proslavery forces to fight for that cause or leave.¹ David, along with his brother James and their two families, chose the latter option. They packed what they could on wagons and trekked 400 miles west to Missouri. James settled in Barry County, but David and his large family found land in Byrd Township, a few miles north of Jackson, the Cape Girardeau County seat.

Southeast Missouri was no place to escape from the national ferment over slavery, but David had more immediate family needs in the late 1850s. Mary Ann died shortly after their arrival, perhaps in childbirth, and David, overwhelmed by parenting duties, soon remarried. Just as the war began he, too, died, leaving his second wife, Susan, with all the burdens of stepmotherhood. Widows had few rights in the antebellum South. David evidently left his estate to his eldest son, Isaac, but Susan lived on the family farm and tended the youngest children while the older ones found homes with friends and relatives. They were better off than some 19th-century American orphans, however. Legal codes often apprenticed poor children to unloving foster families, where they worked long hours like indentured servants, earning their keep.²

Elizabeth Coward was about ten when her father died. She was taken in by a young neighbor couple who were childless at the time. Jacob H. ("Jake") and Morgania Jane Delph lived on a farm west of Jackson. Living with them was Jake's sister, known only by her married name, Evans. A widow with a twelve-year-old son named Dudley, she either soon remarried or died—the family record is very spotty—leaving Dudley to fend for himself. When the war came close to home, he apparently lied about his age and enlisted in the pro-Union Missouri Volunteers.³

Jane Delph was a Limbaugh, the daughter of Daniel and Delilah. She frequently visited her parents on the family homestead in Bollinger County, and her parents dropped in on the Delphs when they came to Jackson on business. Soon everybody in the Limbaugh family knew Elizabeth Coward and Dudley Evans. Later the Delphs had two children of their own, but only one had been born by the time their nephew Dudley and foster child Lizzie had grown up and decided to wed. They married in 1874 and settled on a farm near their foster parents in Byrd Township.⁴

Whether Elizabeth's elder sister, Louisa, stayed on the Coward farm to help her elder brothers or lived elsewhere is not clear from the family record. The Civil War displaced and divided many families. Early in the war Missouri's secessionist governor maneuvered to add his state to the rebel column, but Federal forces at St. Louis had other ideas. They prevented any southern takeover, but Confederate units under Sterling Price continued to threaten the state's pro-Union majority until March 1862. The Battle of Pea Ridge in Arkansas ended the last serious Confederate effort to control the Trans-Mississippi West.⁵

In southeast Missouri, Byrd Township avoided direct conflict, though many young men joined the fighting. Many families were as divided as the Limbaughs, with participants on both sides. At least seven members of various Coward families served on the Union side. Three with the Cowherd name also participated; two were from black families, the third a white rebel with Quantrill's band of "border ruffians." None of these came from either James or David Solomon Coward's immediate family.

After the war Louisa Coward reached womanhood ready for a fresh start. In 1868, when she was twenty-one, she married Robert Hackler, a neighborhood farmer in Byrd Township. He was reportedly a pious young man and most likely opposed war on religious grounds. He had remained safely at home during the war, only to succumb to pneumonia a few months after the nuptials. Suddenly rootless but not disconsolate, Louisa went to live for a time with her uncle James in Barry County, near the Arkansas line. That stay lasted only long enough to consider where best to look for a new life partner. In the early 1870s,

Table 6 The Coward Family Line

1	David Solomon Coward b: 24 July 1806, North Carolina d: Abt. 1860 + Mary Ann Hazelwood b: 27 May 1815, North Carolina
2	Catherine H. Coward b: 1833 in Jefferson County, Tennessee
2	James B. Coward b: 1835, Jefferson County, Tennessee d: 13 March 1856
2	Nancy Coward b: 1837, Jefferson County, Tennessee d: 7 May 1854
2	Isaac M. Coward b: January 1838, Jefferson County, Tennessee
2	Isabelle R. Coward b: 1842, Jefferson County, Tennessee
2	Thomas T. Coward b: 1843, Jefferson County, Tennessee
2	David P. Coward b: 1845, Jefferson County, Tennessee
2	Louisa Caroline Coward b: 11 October 1847, Jefferson County, Tennessee d: 10 June 1920, Pendleton, Oregon + Robert Hackler b: 1846 d: 1869 + John Collins Tucker b: 18 March 1845, Ohio d: 25 December 1910, Culver, Oregon
3	Martha Elizabeth Tucker b: 1 June 1875, Winfield, Kansas d: 14 December 1962, Ontario, Oregon
3	William Newton Tucker b: 8 January 1877, Kansa d: 11 July 1898, Kansas
3	Laura Pearl Tucker b: 20 November 1878, Culver, Oregon d: 28 January 1941, Fruitland, Oregon
3	Rebecca Frances Tucker b: 1 June 1880, Cleveland, Kansas d: 30 June 1957, The Dalles, Oregon
3	Annie May Tucker b: 2 February 1882, Kansas d: 5 May 1883, Kansas
3	Benjamin Arthur Tucker b: 1 December 1886, Kansas d: 12 January 1887, Kansas
2	Jasper William Cowherd b: 7 April 1849, Jefferson County, Tennessee d: 11 April 1925, Portland, Oregon
2	Suzah Elizabeth "Lizzie" Coward b: Abt. 1852, Tennessee d: 26 March 1912, Oregon
2	John S. Coward b: Abt. 1854, Tennessee
2	Millard F. Coward b: 11 June 1856
2	Tenander Coward b: 11 June 1856, Tennessee + Susan b: Abt. 1828, Tennessee

with her younger brother Jasper William ("Will") Coward as escort, the young widow headed west into Kansas.

Kansas was booming with newcomers when the two young Cowards arrived. Between the censuses of 1860 and 1870 the state's population grew 70 percent. The new arrivals spread rapidly westward across the prairie landscape, no longer threatened by Indians or crowded by buffalo. After the Civil War, Union veterans used military land warrants to claim thousands of acres. Railroads, real estate agents, and a variety of other promoters lured pastoral immigrants with hyperbolic ads touting fertile farmlands for homesteading or purchase. "20,000 acres selected farming lands, in Iowa, Illinois, Kansas and Missouri, for sale cheap, for cash. Titles perfect," read one ad in a New England pa-

per. Another assured farmers with the “promise of abundant crops.” Homesteaders claimed nearly three-fourths of the public lands privatized by the end of 1865. The state surveyor general in 1867 counted 2 million acres under cultivation, with 1 million cattle, 1.1 million hogs, 150,000 horses, and 100,000 sheep. Kansas farmers that year produced 40 million bushels of corn, 2.5 million bushels of wheat, and 1 million bushels of potatoes. Almost all of this food and fiber traveled east on 500 miles of railroads, linked to eastern trunk lines in Missouri.⁶

Family history resources are too limited to detail the meanderings of Louisa and Will Coward as they worked their way west. Had they been able to afford rail passage, they probably took the Missouri Pacific from Cape Girardeau to Kansas City, then caught an immigrant train on the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe to a new town site that needed unskilled workers and household help. Or they may have transferred at Sedalia, Missouri, to the Missouri–Kansas–Texas Railroad until it reached Labette City in southeastern Kansas, then left the “Katy” line and took stage or buckboard toward the new boomtowns along the Arkansas. Whether fast or slow, and by whatever means, Louisa and her brother stayed together and kept moving on.

By 1874 they had reached the “new Kansas,” once considered part of the “Great American Desert,” soon redefined as a promotional “garden spot” for immigrants. Wichita, the informal capital of this new domain, grew from a raw cattle town on the Chisholm Trail in 1870 to a railroad hub and commercial center eight years later. Businessmen, speculators, immigrant farmers, and laborers crowded in, perhaps for a brief respite at a cheap hotel or boarding house before spreading into the hinterlands looking for new lands and opportunities. “The country south, southeast and southwest of Wichita,” wrote one enthusiast in 1878, “being almost unsurpassed in quality ... has rapidly filled up, and the tide has not subsided yet.”⁷

The Tuckers

While two wandering Coward family members joined the migration to central Kansas, two brothers from an Ohio family with Connecticut Yankee roots and military land warrants converged on eastern Kansas

looking for good farmland and prospective mates. They stopped near the old fort at Leavenworth and either claimed or rented enough acreage to cultivate, at least for a season. Royal and John Tucker, four years apart in age but nearly identical in background and experience, began life on a small farm in Milan, Ohio, on the Huron River just ten miles south of Lake Erie. Milan Township has a rich history dating back to the colonial period, when the French established a trading post at the mouth of the river to serve the powerful Erie tribe of the Huron Nation. After the Revolution, Connecticut claimed the area on the basis of its royal charter and withheld the "Connecticut Reserve" from the federal public domain until 1800. Half a million acres in this reserve, a tract including Milan called the "Fire Lands," was granted to Connecticut "sufferers" of British inland raids during the Revolutionary War. The young state, needing money for schools, sold the remainder to speculators in 1795 for \$1.2 million. Permanent white occupation of the area, however, did not begin until after Indian claims were ceded in 1805.⁸

Newton T. Tucker, father of the two brothers, arrived in Ohio sometime after the War of 1812. Born about 1815 in Connecticut, he settled in Milan township and soon found a mate, Martha Carey, daughter of a New York immigrant. Married in 1841, they raised seven children and remained on the same small farm Newton worked until he died sometime in the 1870s. Fortunately for family history, we know something more about this couple than simply names and dates. One of their grandchildren, Martha (Tucker) Mortimore, preserved a four-page letter written in 1870 from the Ohio Tuckers to their two wandering sons. It is an important document, the only eyewitness record that illuminates the character and life styles of the home folk.

For fifty-five-year old Newton, rural life was a series of random events he could not control. The harder he tried the worse he felt, both in body and spirit. In a day when 80 percent of white males were dead by the age of fifty, he knew he was living on borrowed time. "Ma is Pretty much workt Down & I am Pretty wel workt up," he wrote in painful and barely literate longhand, "for I have split wood & trimb[ed] Orchards til I am so lame I cant do much more until I recruit [recover?]

Table 7 The Tucker Family Line

1	Newton T. Tucker b: Abt. 1815, Connecticut + Martha Carey b: Abt. 1822, New York d: 2 Feb. 1906
2	Royal H. Tucker b: Abt. 1841 d: 17 Sept. 1918, Hutchinson, Reno Co., Kansas
2	Emily Tucker b: Abt. 1844 d: Abt. 1890
2	John Collins Tucker b: 18 March 1845, Ohio d: 25 Dec. 1910, Culver, Oregon + Louisa Caroline Coward b: 11 Oct. 1847, Jefferson Co., Tennessee d: 10 June 1920, Pendleton, Oregon
3	Martha Elizabeth Tucker b: 1 June 1875, Winfield, Kansas d: 14 Dec. 1962, Ontario, Oregon + Edwin Merritt Fenton Mortimore b: 28 May 1865, Iowa d: 5 Sept. 1943, Ontario, Oregon
4	Evelyn Eloise Mortimore b: 2 June 1903, Madras, Oregon d: 24 Sept. 1994, Lodi, California
4	Paul DeForrest Mortimore b: 6 June 1899, Oregon d: 3 July 1959, Ellensburg, Washington + Joseph Charles Peters b: 18 Oct. 1873, Kirksville, Missouri d: 11 March 1946, Ontario, Oregon
3	William Newton Tucker b: 8 January 1877, Kansas d: 11 July 1898, Kansas
3	Laura Pearl Tucker b: 20 Nov. 1878, Culver, Oregon d: 28 Jan. 28, 1941, Fruitland, Idaho
3	Rebecca Frances Tucker b: 1 June 1880, Cleveland, Kansas d: 30 June 1957, The Dalles, Oregon
3	Annie May Tucker b: 2 Feb. 1882, Kansas d: 5 May 1883, Kansas
3	Benjamin Arthur Tucker b: 1 Dec. 1886, Kansas d: 12 Jan. 1887, Kansas
2	Festus Tucker b: Abt. 1847 d: 1905
2	Angeline Tucker b: 1849 d: June 1864
2	Mary C. Tucker b: Abt. 1855
2	Perry Tucker b: 1861 d: 1898

Somewhat I am not Sick But quite lame all over.” He was better off than some of his neighbors, but the outlook was dark: “there has Been 3 Funerals in the past week,” he reported, two widows and a man. One of the widows left “an infant 2 weeks old & the Old Lady her Mother is But just Alive & Brother Stroops wife is fast wasteing away with Consumption. that Object of pity at Hubels Died some weeks since & how Soon it wil B our turn whoo can tel.” Yet not all deaths were sad. “Old Mrs Rely Mrs Beardslys Mother is Dead in Spite of her[:] it was Reported that She was so contrary that She would not Die until She had vext & Kild off the others first[.] But She has done vexing now.”

His gloomy mood changed when talking about money. “I Sold the Bossy [calf?] when 2 weeks old at \$4.00 & Ma is Seling Buter Enough to Buy all her Snuff & Segars &c &c.” He told the boys not to worry “about home maters,” since his field work and sales had earned enough to buy “4 sacks of flour,” paid the taxes and the interest due on

a promissory note, bought "Cloth for Pants & have got \$1.25 left." He also rented the wagon for \$3.00, split wood for another \$3.00, "& I have got the Balance on my Boots paid & Bought 1/4 Bushel of potatoes & planted them."

After he "quit off & let some one else take the helm," Newton's daughter Emily, a twenty-seven-year-old spinster schoolteacher still living at home, wrote on the back of the same sheet to her "Dear Brothers." Her letter confirms what scholars have long known: pioneer American women were second-class citizens. Responding to urgent pleas from her Kansas kin to join them, she wished that "I could start tomorrow morning but my school is now just one third out and if I should leave it now I could not get any pay." The brothers also wanted their fifteen-year-old sister Mary, evidently a relative taken in by the Tuckers at an early age, to come along. Emily replied that Mary "will be ready to go I suppose as soon as her carpet is out of the loom," but Emily had to wait at least three more months. Why were they so badly needed? Emily's letter makes it clear: "Can't you hire some one to do your work for you" for the next six weeks? If you can wait "and manage some way about your cooking, I will pay whatever it costs you to get your washing, ironing and mending done till we get there...."

The last to take her turn writing on the same stationary was "Ma," the boys' mother, Martha (Carey) Tucker. Her immediate goal was to bring the nuclear family together again. Even if it meant leaving the village where she had lived all her life, she was resigned to "come west" if "the rest do & want to, when all are suited, & decided where is the best place to go to." Yet "the uncertainty of life" made planning difficult. The "many, sudden Deaths," she wrote, "should be a warning to us to be also ready, for we know not who will be called next." This was a common theme among the pious rural poor, reflecting the influence of periodic waves of religious revivalism that swept through 19th-century small towns and villages from western New England to the Pacific Northwest. As one scholar has noted that, among the churches, the "Methodists and Baptists, more literal, more emotional, and better understood by common folk," grew more rapidly than others. Though she mentions no denominations, her comments suggest a Wesleyan

Methodist background in asking her sons to describe “what is the Society there do they have any meetings & what sort etc.” Of course Quakers also organized “societies,” but they migrated west mostly into the Ohio Valley, not into the Lower Lakes region. Even if the Tuckers had no specific church home, they expressed the social and spiritual values that came to be identified with the working-class evangelical holiness movements in American religious life. Newton died in Ohio, but his widow carried the “Good News” westward and left her children a lasting spiritual legacy.⁹

Her two eldest sons found comfort in that legacy during the Civil War. They served in two volunteer regiments that had seen plenty of action before the Tucker brothers joined. Royal was twenty-two, four years older than his blue-eyed brother John, who kept a diary during his military service. In 1862 Royal had enlisted for three years in the 101st Ohio, a regiment that served with the Army of the Cumberland on the western front. He was already a veteran of Stone’s River, Chickamauga, and other battles when his younger brother joined the 51st Ohio in May 1864. Royal’s papers have been lost, but preserved in the family collection are a diary John carried and a pocket-sized New Testament given him by the American Bible Society. His diary lets us follow along as he marched south from Milan to Camp Tod at Columbus, where he received his first paycheck, a \$73 enlistment bounty. He kept \$13 for himself and sent the rest home. The next day the new recruits boarded a troop train for Cincinnati, then a steamboat to Louisville where another train took them on to Nashville and finally to Chattanooga to fill holes in the ranks of his regiment, still recuperating from the fierce western campaigns of the previous fall. Royal’s regiment was encamped nearby.¹⁰

In March 1864 Chattanooga was the “Gateway to the South” for Union forces under Grant’s trusted lieutenant, William Tecumseh Sherman. With Atlanta the prime objective on the western front, they prepared for “total war.” Nearly 100,000 recruits and veterans in twenty divisions together comprised the three western armies of Sherman’s command. The 2,000 men of the 51st and 101st Ohio, part of the Army of the Cumberland under General George H. Thomas, remained in

May 8th 1870.

Dear Brothers, I wish I could write
with you a little while today. But as I cannot
I will try to improve the next best thing.
We were very glad indeed to get your letter
and I do wish that Mary & I could start tomorrow
morning. But my school is now just one third out
and if I should leave it now I could not get my
pay. I have talked with some of the people about it
and they are not willing to let me off on any
short of three months. As for Mary, she will be ready
to go I suppose as soon as her carpet is out of the
room. & then my school will be half out. Now I
know you need Mary very much. & I don't see
how you can possibly get along without someone
but we have to have her go alone. And I would like
so much to go at the same time. & I want you to
write as soon as you get this & say what shall be
done. Shall she start immediately on hearing from
you again, or wait six weeks longer & we go together.
And you have some one to do your work for you
that long. (Don't you see, Mary says) or can't you, you
know best whether it would pay or not. & I will

Milan, Ohio 1/70

Therestons R.H.D.

We are as well as usual. Ex. Mary she has a cold.
& I have thirty much worse. I am
Pretty well. I have just had split wood & shinn
orchards. I am so lame I can do much
more. I received some what I am not
sick. But quite lame all over. I have tramped
orchards, Dracoms & Hy. & willbors & the
widow Brooks & overcom to have Application
to Draft but did not insist.
There has been 3 funerals in the past week
ending to-day. My 1st on Monday widow
Lanclish & on Thursday was Mr. Meaton & to day
widow H. Beardsley leaving an infant 2
weeks old. & the Old Lady near Bothe
is but just alive. & Brother Straps wife
is fast wasting away with Consumption
that Object of pity at Kube to Die
some weeks since. & how soon
it will be over them who can tell.

Figure 14 Newton Tucker Letter

After the Civil War, Newton and Martha Carey Tucker stayed home in Milan, Ohio, while their two sons, John and Royal, looked for good farmland in Kansas. In decrepit long-hand, characteristic of their limited education and advancing years, the two parents described their daily toils and troubles while waiting for their sons to decide where to settle.

winter quarters for two months, waiting for better weather. The incessant monotony of daily drill ceased only when it snowed or rained too hard to parade or practice on the firing range. Picket duty was a twenty-four-hour-a-day job, rain or shine, but there was plenty of free time to improve their living quarters, gather firewood, write letters home, read, or find other diversions to relieve boot camp boredom. When he was off duty John Tucker spent his time reading mail or copies of the *Christian Herald*, a nondenominational evangelical newspaper that his mother sent him. He also took long hikes, gathering acorns and other nuts that he later ground and whittled into rings.

The great spring offensive began on 7 May. Sherman ordered his armies forward, marching into Georgia against Confederate General Joe Johnston's defenses in front of Dalton, guarding the approaches to

Atlanta. The next day Thomas's troops tested the defensive line at Tunnel Hill and Buzzard's Roost while the rest of Sherman's men marched around Johnston's left flank. Johnston retreated to Resaca, then Allatoona to avoid another flanking movement. Except for brief skirmishes and a major battle at Kennesaw Mountain, for the next two months the two contenders side-stepped each other all the way to Atlanta.¹¹

John Tucker had little time for reflection during the Atlanta campaign. In bivouac each night he wrote terse, unsentimental descriptions of the day's events. On 7 May he summed up a long day in one sentence: "Started early in the morning & swep every thing clean toward Tunnel Hill, drove in their Piquets & after Shelling them a little while we drove them out of their strong hold Went on Piquet at 4 in the afternoon."

The next day was Sunday, but his thoughts focused only on the immediate task: "On the Skirmish line all day, drove the Enemy back into Buzzard roost without much loss then we fell back after dark to where we started from in the morning." After Johnston had fallen back to Resaca, he and his comrades woke up on the 13th to find "that the Rebs had left their strong holds & were skedaddeing [sic] for our folks were flanking them & we started after them captured some prisoners & our skirmishers cracking at them all the time." Rumors floated on the 16th that the "Rebs" lost 10,000 at the Battle of Resaca and stole away in the night leaving their wounded on the field. The actual loss was much smaller, but the continual retreat demoralized the Confederates and made the Union boys cocky. Next day the Yankee pickets "had a good time a shooting at Bushes" and corralling the deserters that "keep co-meing in all the time."¹²

The cockiness faded quickly with the first signs of typhoid, dysentery, and malaria—the South's "General Summer." In reality, summer diseases, especially on active campaigns with no time for proper sanitation, swept through the ranks on both sides. As Sherman's armies pushed toward Atlanta, warm weather brought out the mosquitoes. At Kingston on 21 May, John and several others "Got up this morning unwell & was taken back after noon to Kingston to the hospital, went into an empty ward & made ourselves as comfortable as we could with

a little straw until we could be sent to Chattanooga.” After a rough night they boarded some box cars for a long ride in cars “cramed full of sick & some crazy.” They stopped at Chattanooga only long enough for dinner, then “were on the road all day again jerking along crowded into box cars” headed to the Cumberland Hospital in Nashville. John spent the next month in convalescence, taking quinine and “powders for Diarhea” while he recuperated at various hospitals and homes in Tennessee and Kentucky.¹³

On 22 June, aboard a hospital boat docked near Louisville, John was ordered to report back to his regiment, now with Thomas’s First Division confronting the strong defenses at Kennesaw Mountain. The long train ride toward the front in hot, crowded boxcars with intermittent stops took several days. By the time he reached Chattanooga he had swollen ankles and a bad cough. Unfit for active duty, he was sent back to Cumberland Hospital for more convalescence. His brother Royal evidently was already there, convalescing after the same illness.

Both Tucker boys remained behind through the rest of the Atlanta campaign and Sherman’s subsequent “march to the sea.” After Atlanta fell and remnant Confederate forces under Hood threatened the Union rear, Sherman sent Thomas and his army to stop the rebel move on key Tennessee railroads. In mid-December the “Rock of Chickamauga” led his troops to a decisive victory at the Battle of Nashville, the last major action of the war in the western theater.¹⁴

While the fighting raged around Nashville, Royal and John were nursing sick and wounded soldiers in Chattanooga. The War Department often assigned recovering patients to convalescent care until a special commission declared them fit for active duty. Untrained and often unwilling, these attendants built the fires, carried the waste, swept the floors, washed and cleaned, and cooked along with other menial tasks, but they also learned the essentials of patient care under the supervision of hospital stewards and ward masters. For six months John worked in Nashville and Chattanooga hospitals, busy tending the flood of new patients during active campaigning, but growing increasingly bored and restless as the war wound down. “At work as usual,” he often told his diary. “The Servant girl Still,” he reminded himself.¹⁵

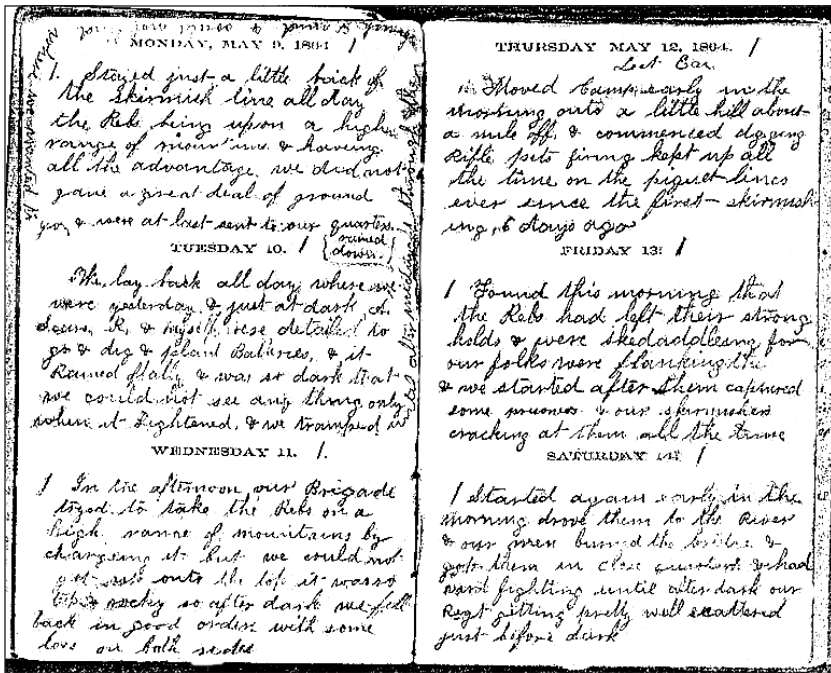


Figure 15 John Tucker's Civil War Diary

John Tucker was in the thick of fighting as General Sherman's armies invaded the right flank of the Confederacy in May 1864. He and his older brother, Royal, lasted a month before the South's "General Summer" devastated northern ranks with malaria, yellow fever, and other debilitating diseases. Shipped to Chattanooga hospitals in boxcars along with many of their comrades, the Tucker brothers were still convalescing when the war ended nearly a year later. Photocopy from original in private hands.

Turning to religion was almost an instinctive response in this environment. A contemporary poem reflects the morbid religious sentimentality that affected caregivers and patients alike in a field hospital: "Narrow beds by one another—/ White and low!/ Through them softly, as in church-aisles,/ Nurses go/ ... 'Strong men, in a moment smitten / Down from strength,' Brave men, now in anguish praying—Death at length .../ White and whiter grows the glory/ On his brow; Does he see the towers of Zion/ Rising now?/ Stands the doctor, weary, hurried,/ By his bed;/ 'Here is room for one more wounded—/ He is dead.'"¹⁶ Sentimental, yes, but not sad to a sanctified Christian "filled with the love of God," as a veteran wrote after a conversion experience.

Sanctification was a tenet in the “holiness movement,” an emotional counterpoint to the secular rationalism of the 18th-century Enlightenment. Holiness derived from John Wesley’s assertion that conversion and atonement were only the first steps toward salvation. A true Christian reached “perfection” only through God’s Grace, by cleansing “the flesh and the Spirit” and living a holy life free of “pride, self-will, anger, love of the world,” and other manifestations of sin. Death had no fear to the “truly pious Christian,” as Charles Lowell, a Unitarian pastor and father of poet James Russell Lowell, told his parishioners one Sunday morning in 1826.¹⁷

Religion was a form of relief to Civil War veterans lacking medical help for emotional stress. The War Department recognized the need for battlefield chaplains, but appointed many who were untrained and some who were incompetent. In some cases distressed soldiers had better luck with sympathetic comrades. John Newton Shepherd, a pious Iowa volunteer with a Union army in Arkansas, organized prayer meetings in the field after finding one distraught volunteer on his knees praying for sanctification.

John Tucker also turned closer to religion a few days after arriving in Nashville following his first bout with malaria. He “attended Prayer meeting this evening, & promised with a number of others to try to serve our Maker, while we live.” The previous Sunday he had gone to “Church in the morning & Prayer meeting in the evening in one of the eating houses.” Thereafter he rarely missed the nondenominational services held for patients twice a week. A month later he had “finished reading the New Testament through Today and commenced on the Old Testament.” The surviving pocket-size testament he carried was saved by his daughter and is still in the family. It reflects the character of his own struggles with temptation. Every passage mentioning “sanctification” is highlighted with a pencil.¹⁸

After the Battle of Nashville the Army of the Cumberland chased the remnants of Hood’s shattered units, then moved into Alabama to protect the railroad link to Tennessee. On 26 January 1865, the two Tucker brothers, finally declared fit for duty, rejoined their regiments at Huntsville. Union troops remained largely an occupying force in the

interior South for the rest of the war—and for months thereafter. Royal was mustered out with his regiment in June; John stayed on until the 51st Ohio was discharged at Victoria, Texas, in October.¹⁹

For the next five years the Tucker family fortunes are unknown. The 1870 letter quoted earlier hints at an Iowa interlude, but that may have been only an exploring expedition prior to the Kansas trek. Emily decided that her parents needed her more than her brothers. She stayed in Ohio, but Mary headed west, arriving in Leavenworth later that year to help John with the fall harvest on their rented land. In the meantime Royal took a train to western Kansas, scouting the prairie for good land available to veterans. If John's October letter to his parents in Ohio is any indication, the bottomlands in eastern Kansas were hard to beat.

I tell you our Tatoes and "Cabbich" Beets and Turnimups & c. grow like fun. And Sweetpotatoes till you can't see. Our late planted corn done fine. And was ripe two weeks ago and not a sign of frost yet. And we sold it all at \$16.00 per acre ...

It was a wet year, but good for potatoes. Kansas farmers the previous season had boasted of "their enormous potato crop" that was "excellent food for hogs and cattle, and splendid for railroad laborers."²⁰ John was too religious to boast, but he skirted sin in reporting the success of his root crops: "wet weather makes them [Murphy's potatoes] large, worth \$1.00 yet.... [Dug a hill] with 15 sweet Potatoes in. about 8 In. long on an average, some of them are 3 inches in diameter and 10 or 12 long. Beets so large that Mary says she can't peel some of them...."

Proceeds from crop sales gave John enough to build a buggy, part of the equipment needed for moving on. He may have regretted leaving Leavenworth, but the Tuckers wanted land they could call their own. He closed his letter with a pragmatic look at the future. "I tell him [Royal] it seems to me that it would be best to get the land that is intended for Soldiers, for if it is not a better chance than the citizen lands then why do they make any distinction either in price or location[?] ...

We want to take the best chance (all things considered) and then make up our minds to stick to it.”²¹

Whether Royal followed this practical advice is still an open question. Too many holes remain in the family record to know how his quest for good land turned out. A search of federal land records did not find either Royal or John’s name in Kansas. Military land warrants were negotiable and transferrable, so the Tuckers may have sold or traded them before they moved on.

After they left Leavenworth the two brothers followed separate paths. Royal decided farming was not his forté. He took up carpentering, and eventually became a building contractor. After marrying Mary E. Boone in 1877, the couple settled in Hutchinson, Kansas, on the Arkansas River northwest of Wichita. Five children and twenty years later, Royal was a widower. His last years were bitter and full of complaints. One letter to his niece in 1916 is typical:

What in the wide world is the matter of you People [for not writing].... I am completely disabled.... I have been under treatment for Kidney and Bladder trouble for five years ... then I have a terrible rupture of the Bowels that cannot be controlled or cured. And it is very painful; You have no idea wat [sic] I suffer, continually every day; and there seems to be no help for me.

His immediate kin had problems of their own. His sister “is a great Sufferer with Rheumatism and neuralgia,” and her son “is a bad Boy, is disipated, Stayes out till eleven and twelve oclock nights, Smokes and chews, and plays pool, it looks as though he was trying to get rid of His mother.” One of his daughters “is still running a Rooming House, Her Husband took what money They had saved up ... and left Her, They do not Know where he is, and She is alone with the three Children.” Add bad weather and high prices, and the list finally ended with Royal asking his niece to “let us Know whether you are dead or alive, and what the Dear Lord is doing for you.”²²

Royal’s troubles ended in 1918. He died in Hutchinson and was buried in a Civil War section of the local cemetery.

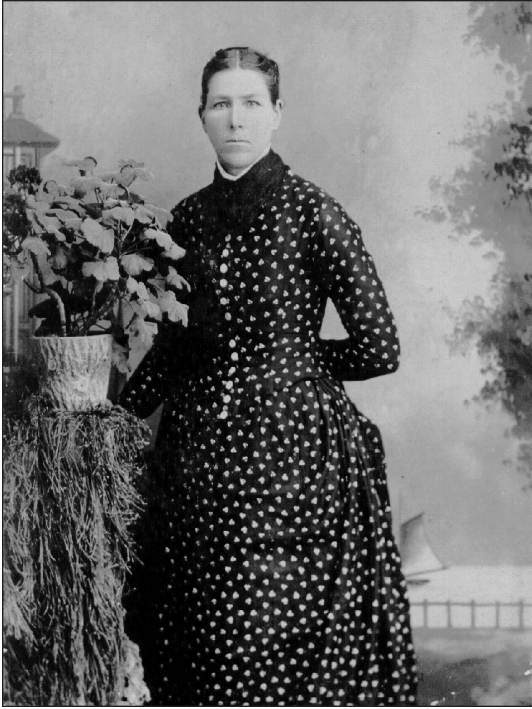


Figure 16

Louisa Tucker

A studio portrait made after she and her second husband, John Collins Tucker, moved to Kingman, Kansas, in the mid-1870s. The exquisite detail and the stern look are indicative of the slow film speed in that era, when photographers kept their subjects braced with headrests to prevent movement. But the pose also suggests the sober life of an evangelical farmer's wife starting a family on the Kansas prairie.

His brother John spent most of his Kansas years looking for “the best chance.” After his young helper Mary returned to Ohio, he searched south central Kansas for good land. Many other farm immigrants had similar ambitions, including the young widow Hackler and her brother Will Coward. Where John and Louisa met is not known, but most likely at a church social. Next to the Baptists, the Methodists were the most numerous in Cowley County. In 1874 they married in Wichita, just ahead of the locust plague that swept through the central plains, wiping out the crops of thousands of farmers. In Sedgwick County, next door to Cowley, over 11,000 residents reported food shortages, and 3,000 needed clothing that winter. Like other marginal farmers, the newlyweds packed what was left and moved again, this time to Belmont Township in Kingman County. Louisa’s younger brother Will stayed with them until he found a mate. In 1884 he married Ella Mahala Wilkins and relocated to another farm in Kingman county.²³

The Mortimores

The Tucker–Coward nexus is one link of a family chain that began to form in America’s heartland. Some background is required before we can connect the Mortimores to these families. In an earlier chapter we left the Mortimores preparing to leave North Carolina for new lands outside the slaveholding South. In August 1811, five years after his father William died, David Mortimore sold 203 acres, his share of William’s estate, for \$600. The price included 22 acres he had acquired on his own near the Haw River. Fourteen months later his brother Robert sold 43 acres of his father’s estate for \$500, leaving 160 acres next to his sister Sally’s share (120 acres) for a later sale.

Why the discrepancy in prices over a short period for essentially the same type and quality of land? Most likely because of the economic slump that gripped the South and West in the years prior to the War of 1812. During the Napoleonic Wars President Jefferson had banned American shipping on the high seas, hoping to force the belligerents to respect American neutrality rights. It was a vain effort that hurt American exporters much more than the arrogant British, whose powerful fleet controlled the sea-lanes. Although the policy was modified after 1809, the depression caused by Jefferson’s shortsighted decree and European naval policies lingered on for three more years. In the cotton- and grain-producing regions of the South and West, all those hurt by falling commodity prices and declining property values blamed the British and clamored for war. Farmers, traders, and land speculators, the biggest advocates of western expansion, also blamed British agents for stirring up Indian unrest in the Old Northwest and on the Southwest frontier. The mounting pressure came to a head in 1812, when Congress, led by southern “War Hawks” John C. Calhoun of South Carolina and Henry Clay of Kentucky, passed a declaration of war that President Madison signed on 18 June. In the euphoria that followed, land and commodity prices in the South and West began to rise.²⁴

Declaring war was one thing; defeating the British and their Indian allies was quite another. The Americans were woefully lacking in preparations, planning, and tactics. Except for a few heroic naval battles on the Great Lakes and General Harrison’s campaign against Tecumseh in

1813, American military operations failed miserably in Canada, which seemed the only place where the British were vulnerable. In the Southwest, volunteers under Andrew Jackson upheld American honor by defeating the Creek nation in 1814 and a British assault force at New Orleans a year later. A few isolated wins did not offset the dismal overall record, however. Americans were lucky to achieve a stalemate with a major power after three years of desultory fighting.

The Treaty of Ghent ended the war and began a new era of spectacular American growth and prosperity. Better and cheaper interior lands attracted thousands of migrants from older states, where exhausted soils and high taxes hurt marginal farmers. Hundreds of Piedmont families in western Virginia and the Carolinas, including the two sons of William Mortimore, also migrated westward to escape increasing competition because of slavery and the expansion of plantation agriculture. Those who opposed slavery outright crossed the Ohio River into the Northwest Territories, where slavery had been prohibited by Congress since 1787. They joined many Kentucky pioneers already there. Kentuckians had pioneered Trans-Appalachian settlement decades earlier. Kentucky militia had fought with George Rogers Clark during the Revolution and with General Harrison against Tecumseh during the War of 1812. After the war they spread widely through the Ohio Valley and westward into southern Indiana and Illinois.²⁵

David and Robert Mortimore had substantial means and large families when they left North Carolina, heading for central Ohio. David and his wife, Hannah (whose last name has never been identified but may have been Plemworth or Plymouth), raised a family of (at least) seven children. David's brother Robert and his wife, Sarah (Crouch), reared ten children of their own. Both brothers were born before 1775, but their actual birth dates are unknown. Neither are the precise dates of their trek north. A cemetery record of one of Robert's sons shows an Ohio birth date of 1814, but David and his family may have waited until 1817, when his sister Sally sold her 120-acre share of their father's estate for \$3.00 per acre—the same price David had received for his land five years before. With a wide-open frontier now beckoning newcomers, old lands had less appeal. Sally was in her mid-forties at the

time, evidently a spinster. Thereafter, her life is a mystery. No clues have surfaced to indicate whether she accompanied her brothers to the Northwest or remained in the Carolinas.²⁶

Ohio was the first stop for many Trans-Appalachian migrants after 1815. In the late 1780s, after the Ordinance of 1785 established the grid system of surveys for public lands, Congress opened Ohio lands for sale and provided for land sales at auction. It took another decade to push back the remaining Native Americans in upper Ohio. The Treaty of Greenville (1795) cleared the way for settlement, but speculators already held the best lands. They were the first subdividers, acquiring huge tracts for as little as 8 cents per acre, dividing them into smaller plots and reselling them for much more. Speculators offered more generous terms to settlers than government land officers could until conservative federal land laws gradually gave way to the Jeffersonian ideal of “land for the landless.” Over the next two decades, Congress reduced the minimum size of tracts sold to individuals, lowered the minimum price of direct sales, established a federal credit system, and created new land offices closer to the frontier. By the 1820s most surveyed and unencumbered government land in the Old Northwest was selling for the minimum price of \$1.25 per acre (\$803 in 2009 prices). But speculators still held millions of acres until well into the 19th century.²⁷

Overland travelers had a wide choice of routes to the interior. A building boom in the 1790s had led to the construction of many wagon roads, bridges, fords, and ferries along the major river routes. By the early 1800s three main road systems linked major coastal cities to the Ohio Valley. There were also shorter overland routes to navigable rivers, but continuing a river voyage required building and riding a flatboat. The Mortimore trek most likely began with a short wagon ride north from Guilford to connect with the Richmond Road running west across the upper Shenandoah Valley. Turning left would put them on the famous route pioneered by Daniel Boone—through the Appalachians at Cumberland Gap, then into Kentucky via the Wilderness Road. Near Lexington they probably turned right toward Maysville on the Ohio River. After a ferry ride they would be on the southern end of Zane’s Trace, built in the 1790s, the “first road across Ohio.” A week

later they would have reached Chillicothe on the Scioto River, the headquarters of many promoters selling land to newcomers in south central Ohio. Traveling at the normal wagon speed of ten miles a day, the trip would have taken at least two months.²⁸

The Scioto was navigable for 150 miles north through Columbus and on to a portage that brought travelers to the Sandusky River. From that point it was an easy boat ride to ports on Lake Erie. To attract immigrants in the “Era of Good Feelings” following the Ghent treaty, promoters touted the Scioto as a commercial artery for shallow-draft steamboats and barges carrying flour and whiskey from Kentucky and central Ohio to Detroit, the inevitable “grand emporium of trade and commerce” in the inland Northwest. But river traffic was slow and sometimes stopped altogether when low water in late summer exposed snags and sandbars just at the peak of harvest. Until railroads took over after the 1850s, roads and canals carried most of Ohio’s produce to market.²⁹

If poor inland commercial transportation routes discouraged some immigrant farmers after the War of 1812, others were disappointed by the discrepancies between promotional and real farmland prices once they arrived in central Ohio. David Mortimore’s \$600 return from Guilford property sales was a handsome sum compared with the 40-cent average daily wage for a contemporary farm laborer, or approximately \$125 a year. In purchasing power, today that \$600 would be equivalent to \$385,595. He could have afforded 480 acres of federal land at that price. But federal acreage was scarce in central Ohio. Much of the land was either in the hands of speculators or farmers from eastern states. A good example is Pickaway County, twenty miles due north of Chillicothe on the Scioto River. The river marked the dividing line between small farms on the east side that were bought and settled earlier by Pennsylvania farmers, and some 4 million acres on the west side that were once part of the Virginia Military Reserve. After the Revolution speculators had bought warrants to thousands of acres from impoverished soldiers for pennies on the dollar. Until prices rose these absentee owners often rented land to tenant farmers coming from the slave states. The Mortimores may have been one of those immigrant

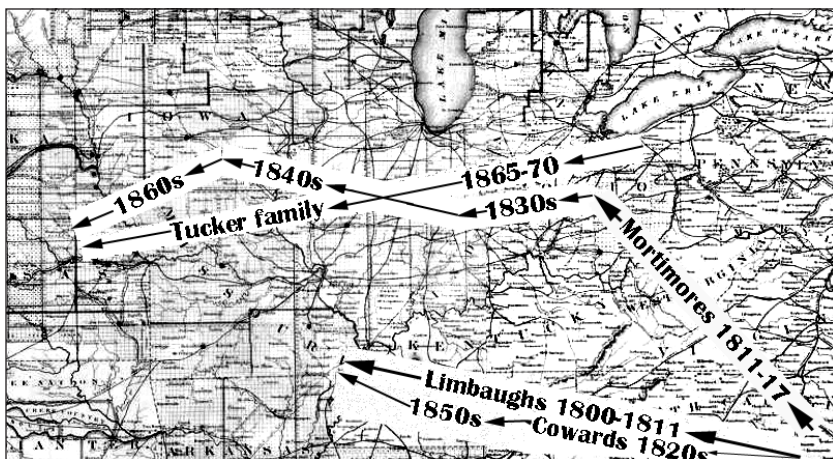


Figure 16 Family Routes to the Midwest

Americans crossed the continent in periodic spurts. As new lands opened, families resettled if political and economic circumstances seemed favorable. But, as the westward migration of the Limbaugh, Mortimore, and related families demonstrates, emotion played a greater role than reason in the decision to move. Like most opportunistic individuals and families, they were motivated primarily by their own hopes and dreams. "Map of the United States and Territories, Showing the Extent of Public Surveys and Other Details, Constructed from the Plats and Official Sources of the General Land Office under the direction of Jos. S. Wilson, Commissioner, by Joseph Grolinski, Draughtsman, 1867," in Library of Congress Geography and Map Division.

families. David's daughter Charlotte married Jacob Blue there in 1818. But the Mortimore name does not appear in Pickaway land records, so they probably only rented local farmland while they looked elsewhere for good land at better prices.³⁰

Land speculators and their heirs faced new competition in central Ohio as newly surveyed government tracts came on the market. Small farmers often "squatted" on public ahead of survey, then organized "claim clubs" to prevent speculators outbidding settlers when the land was sold at auction. In the words of an early chronicler, "If a speculator made a bid, or showed a disposition to take a settler's claim from him, he soon saw the whites of a score of eyes glaring at him, and he would 'crawfish' out of the crowd at the first opportunity."³¹

As land prices fell, newcomers flooded in, cutting and burning their way across huge swaths of virgin forest to clear land for farming. At times the smoke from burn piles cut visibility and choked residents as

far as Zanesville seventy-five miles downwind. In 1822 the executor of a large estate auctioned off thousands of acres in thirteen counties, all from the Virginia Military Reserve, in parcels ranging from 140 to over 2,000 acres. The seller promised “very low prices,” but still “reserve[d] ... the right of making one bid on behalf of the estate.” Actual prices realized from the sale are unknown, but David Mortimore may have been among the bidders. In 1823 he bought 400 acres in Fayette County, presumably working the land with his elder sons. For nearly a decade he and several related Mortimores lived there—or at least paid taxes on Fayette County property. Several other Mortimore families took up acreages nearby.³²

By the late 1820s old family ties had begun to unravel as the second generation of Carolina-born Mortimores married and sought fresh fields on the fringes of settlement. Among the first to branch out were two sons of David and Hanna. Not much is known about William, the eldest, born about 1800. He came with his parents to Ohio, married at age twenty-two, raised a large family, farmed near his parents’ land until about 1830, then migrated to northern Indiana with his younger brother Thomas Plemworth (Plymouth?) Mortimore. William died in 1844 on his Fountain County farm. Plemworth—the name was hard for semi-literate census takers to spell correctly—was three years younger than William. Born in Guilford in 1803, he was twenty-three when he married Patsy Deshill (Driskill?) in Fayette County, Ohio. For a few years he farmed near his father, but took his family to northern Indiana and settled in Tippecanoe County near his brother.

In the Jacksonian era, opening new lands as soon as they became available on the expanding frontier seemed a “manifest destiny” to farm families like the Mortimores. Native Americans had no recourse but to fight or give way, and fighting was a poor choice given the overwhelming tide of settlers moving west. The tragic story of Black Hawk and his small band seeking peace but facing slaughter by well-armed militia in 1832 is typical of the sad history of 19th-century Indian–white relations. After the Black Hawk War the federal government moved swiftly to remove the remaining Northwest tribes and transform the landscape. Indian removal could hardly keep pace with the westward movement

that rapidly filled the Lake Plains with farms and villages. In northern Indiana, among the waves of whites sweeping across the state were four other children of David and Hanna Mortimore—Alfred, Newton, David Jr., and Charlotte, along with their spouses and children. David and Hanna eventually came as well, buying land in Elkhart County but probably letting their sons do most of the farming.³³

Farm life on the moving frontier did not appeal to all Mortimore families. David's brother Robert and his progeny stayed in Ohio, where new opportunities opened in town planning and development. Two of Robert's sons pioneered town building in Madison County. Thomas Crouch Mortimore was a businessman, one of the first merchants in the town of Jefferson. Doubtless he helped promote the career of his younger brother David—yes, still another David to befuddle genealogists! This David was quite a promoter himself. Born about 1814 in Ohio, he married in 1833 and the next year, at the age of twenty, was selected to represent Jefferson as one of its six councilmen.

By 1840 he had moved on, this time to southeastern Iowa as a land speculator and town planner. In Louisa County on the Illinois border he filed a townsite claim on newly opened federal land. With a business partner, Levi Rice, David tried to promote the new town of Columbus City. When lot sales faltered and land titles came under a cloud, he and his partner parted company after a series of lawsuits that ended with David acquiring Rice's shares. In the winter of 1840, he tried to negotiate a dubious deal with public officials, whereby he would donate forty town lots for a "seminary of learning" if the Iowa state legislature would approve a bill to sell the lots by lottery. The bill failed to pass, prompting David to move on again.³⁴

Sometime during his years in Ohio or Iowa David also took up the study of medicine. Perhaps he felt inspired to enter a profession that an earlier Mortimer had pursued in the Carolinas a century before. Though no record of attendance in a medical school has turned up, by 1847 he was a practicing physician in St. Louis, Missouri. How long or under what circumstances he practiced is unknown, but he and his extensive family were living in Louisville, Kentucky, when he died in 1870 at the age of fifty-six.³⁵

Compared with the promotional business ventures of his nephew, the elder David Mortimore's farming career seems commonplace. Indeed, "common man" was a popular term in mid-nineteenth century, a reflection of the Jacksonian emphasis on democratic individualism and equality. In a day when agriculture was the largest contributor to the nation's gross national product, farming seemed the most likely path to prosperity for the average American.

By 1840 David and Hanna were in their sixties and declining rapidly. Thanks to the painstaking research of Eva Goeken, we have a fairly clear picture of their last years. Late in 1846 they signed an agreement with Jacob Blue, their son-in-law, to turn over 80 acres of land and all their personal property in turn for a promise—secured by a \$500 bond—to "keep the said David Mortimore and his wife in the necessaries of life ... and after their decease to bury them in a stile corresponding with their situation in life...." The contract was not unusual for the time, but it was abruptly terminated by the untimely death of Blue in 1847 at age fifty-two. His wife, Charlotte, died two years later, about the same time as her father, David. Hanna then moved in with her son Alfred until she, too, died a few years later, the only one to reach seventy.

Plemworth's parents stayed behind when he started westward again in 1840. In January he sold his 80-acre tract and a couple of town lots in Elkhart County. Though hard evidence is lacking, it seems likely that he had closely followed newspaper reports of new farmlands opening in the tall grasslands of southeastern Iowa after the Indians were removed. Another incentive may have been the Pre-emption Law of 1841. This gave federal support to squatters for the first time in American history. It allowed small farmers to claim farmland on the public domain in advance of survey, and to make improvements on the claim and purchase it at the minimum price of \$1.25 per acre when the land was sold.³⁶

Squatters needed this new legal protection when the last Iowa Indian lands opened for settlement. If the laws were not enough, claim owners associations threatened "summary process" if necessary to ward off speculators. Early in 1842 the Sac and Fox Indians were "per-

suaded” by treaty promises to give up their remaining claims in Iowa and move to the “One Big Indian Reservation” on the high plains beyond the path of white settlement. Army units kept most “boomers” out until midnight on the opening day, when 2,000 feverish fortune-hunters rushed in to stake claims of 80 to 320 acres on the “New Purchase.” Government surveyors and county boundaries soon followed. By 1844 Wapello County was carved out of the undulating prairie and timberlands along the Des Moines River, a total of 432 square miles with Ottumwa as the county seat.³⁷

Plemworth Mortimore and his family arrived in southeastern Iowa during the height of this land excitement. They claimed or bought land in Columbia Township, near Eddyville, the town sixteen miles north of Ottumwa founded by Indian trader J. P. Eddy in 1841. Developing his farmstead gave Plemworth little time for civic affairs, but as one of the few established household heads in these early years he was required to join the local militia as well as respond to jury duty. In 1844 he served on the first jury in a civil case that found the defendant liable for \$23.54. It was dismissed on appeal early in 1845.³⁸

Plemworth was the first of the Indiana Mortimores in Iowa but not the last. In the late 1850s his younger brother Alfred sold his land in Elkhart County and resettled in Jasper County, near the center of the state just east of Des Moines. His motive for moving is unclear, but it may have been after the death of his mother Hanna and the release of an obligation to his wife’s parents. In 1838, two years after marrying Frances Seward in Indiana, he had signed an agreement similar to the one his brother-in-law Jacob Blue had made with David and Hanna in 1846. It promised to care for Frances’s mother and stepfather until their deaths. Another relative of Plemworth, David B. Mortimore (born about 1840), also reached Iowa sometime before 1880. The census that year shows him with wife and one son living in Wapello County.

Double or even triple marriages among adjoining farm families were quite common on the American frontier. What better way to find lifetime partners than among the immediate neighbors? One of Plemworth’s neighbors in Wapello County was a large family from Ohio, the Fentons. John Fenton was a native Virginian, a farmer about Plem-

worth's age. In Ohio he had married Lucinda Kirkpatrick and started a family that eventually totaled ten children. Every two years or so a new child would arrive, conveniently documenting the family's moves in the census record. Around 1836 they moved from Ohio to Illinois, then to Indiana two years later. They may have known the Mortimores in Elkhart County, and perhaps moved with Plemworth's family to Iowa in 1844. The actual dates are unimportant, but the Fentons were in Wapello County at least by 1846 and close friends of the Mortimores by the early 1850s. In 1853, Plemworth's youngest son, David—yes, another David!—married John Fenton's eldest daughter, Sarah Jane. Born in 1832, two years after his wife, David farmed near his father-in-law's family. His neighbor was John Fenton's son, John Henry Fenton, who in 1857 married David's younger sister Eliza Jane. Naming their first child Henry Plemworth Mortimore Fenton was their way of celebrating the union of these two pioneer families.

David Mortimore also had an older sister, Elizabeth, whose life was cut short by tragedy. In the late 1840s after she and her family had reached Iowa, she found a mate in a newly arrived neighboring family. Thomas Paul came from a Virginia farm family that had lived in one of the mountain counties when he was born in 1828. They migrated westward in stages, and perhaps had met the Mortimores in Indiana before both families left for Iowa. The actual date of their marriage is confused, but whatever the date the Pauls believed that God had willed their union and blessed them with children.³⁹

Elizabeth Mortimore Paul had at least seven children in eleven years, and was pregnant with her eighth late in 1861 when her husband's family decided to move again. Thomas Paul's brother John had died in 1852, but his widow, Ellen, remarried John Maguire, a widower with four children. In the spring of 1862 the Maguires and Pauls joined a wagon train headed to the Pacific Northwest. One of the Paul children, ten-year-old Ellen, wrote an account of the trip many years later. She vaguely attributed the reason for moving to "western fever." After the Union draft was announced in 1864 the governor of Iowa offered a more cynical explanation. "Large numbers of men qualified for military duty are preparing to depart ... beyond the Missouri," he

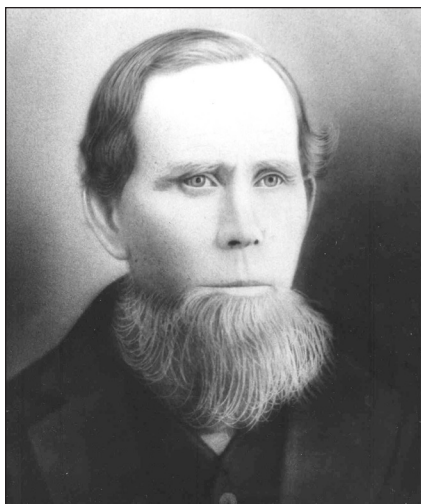


Figure 18 David Mortimore

David Mortimore (1832–1905) wore this full goatee probably to hide his receding chin, a common trait of his siblings. The son of an Indiana pioneer who joined the land rush to Kansas after the Civil War, he lived a hard life as a farmer and woodcutter. Bad luck added to his trouble, losing land and money to various contingencies, including drought, grasshoppers, and thieves. He also lost his hand in a logging accident and died a lonely old man, too feeble even to feed himself.

complained. Those who can stand such an “undertaking so arduous, and able to delve in the golden mines of Colorado, Nevada, and Idaho would make excellent material for filling up the wasted ranks of the Union Army.” Thousands of draft dodgers did indeed escape to the Far West after 1863, but most were from the border states. For Iowans moving to the Oregon country in 1862, the motive was probably either gold fever or land hunger. Sadly for Elizabeth, she never got beyond the high plains of what is now western Wyoming. She had endured three months of bouncing through clouds of dust in a prairie schooner on a daily ration of fried meat and wormy biscuits, all the while menaced by real or perceived Indian raids. On 27 July she died giving birth to a child who lived only a week. A monument now marks the spot where she was buried, after her father-in-law preached a sermon over her grave.⁴⁰

Though the Pauls left for the Far West, the Fentons and Mortimores remained close to each other in Iowa through the Civil War. Military rosters list thirty-eight Mortimores serving both Union and Confederate units, but apparently none was a close relative of Plemworth and his family. More than 500 Fentons also enlisted, including a John Fenton from Iowa—possibly the husband of Eliza Jane Mortimore, although the records are too vague to know for certain. If he did serve he was lucky to return safely in good health.

Child-rearing was the occupational norm of farm wives in that age. After the war John Henry and Eliza Fenton stayed on their Iowa farm for at least the next twenty years, raising a large family. Sarah Jane Mortimore's productive years were longer than her Aunt Elizabeth's, starting with Roxena Jane in 1854 and ending nineteen years and eleven children later with Marinda Belle in 1873. Only six of these children survived infancy, however, and Roxena died at the age of twenty-four.

Two of their neighbors were also raising big families, but like the Pauls they looked elsewhere for land. Land prices in postwar Iowa rose too quickly for young farm families to keep up. Just as Iowa war veterans were returning with land warrants and bounty money to spend, William Mortimore and his younger brother David sold their small farms in Wapello County and took their families to southeastern Kansas. David reached Anderson County in the summer of 1865, just a couple of months after the birth of his ninth child, Edward Merrit Fenton Mortimore. According to an old county history, he was one of several "gentlemen" settlers in Indian Creek (later Ozark) Township. But he didn't stay long. William settled about the same time in Labette County, on the border with Indian Territory (now Oklahoma).⁴¹

Eastern Kansas was the last stop for Plemworth and his wife, Patsy. After settling their affairs in Iowa they followed their sons westward. With their children grown and scattered there was no reason to remain in Wapello. They found a place in Miami County, not to farm but to live out their days in reasonable comfort. Plemworth died in 1870. His widow spent her last few years alone in their home at Sugar Creek, far from David and his family, who left for California in the late 1870s. But William and other Mortimores still lived nearby. Patsey died in 1883 and was buried next to her husband in the Sugar Creek cemetery.

Almost constantly on the move or at least planning the next big trek, the Limbaugh, Tucker, Mortimore, Evans, and Coward families typify the common hopes and experiences of American farmers in the 19th century. Whether pushed out by unforeseen economic, political, or social disturbances, or pulled to new frontiers by promotional ads that

promised more than they could deliver, many members of these families and their kinfolk joined the army of migrants lured to new lands in the American heartland. Some stopped moving and put down deep roots, but others, perhaps poorer and more restless, moved on until they had reached the far fringes of the continent and could move no more.

Kansas to Oregon: 1870–1900

Two ideologies motivated the late 19th-century American westward movement. The first, Manifest Destiny, had been around a long time. Born after the Revolution, it reached a crescendo by the Mexican War. Expansionists envisioned a continental empire of egalitarian farmers and merchants blessed by Providence and united by a common white Anglo-Saxon Protestant heritage. The second, Social Darwinism, reinforced the first with a pseudo-scientific justification for American-style expansion and progress. Darwin's evolutionary biology applied equally well to human societies, declared Herbert Spencer and other advocates. Nothing could—or should—be done to alter the inexorable law of natural selection, where only the “fit” survive.

Progressive ideas like these found good testing ground on the high plains of Kansas after the Civil War. The Sunflower State boomed with newcomers in the late 1860s. As in Iowa and the Dakotas, thousands of ex-soldiers with military land warrants crowded in to stake claims on newly opened prairie soils. Small farmers by the trainload from eastern states and Europe flocked in to take advantage of generous new federal land laws promising “land for the landless.” By 1867 the Kansas surveyor general estimated that the state's population at 300,000 people and a million hogs, with 2 million acres “improved and under cultivation.” Boosters promoted the land's fertility and easy marketing

conditions. With soldiers chasing away the Indians, buffalo disappearing, and rails rapidly crossing the state, progress seemed inevitable at every level. The “enormous potato crop” alone was “excellent food for hogs and cattle, and splendid for railroad laborers.” Even the piles of buffalo bones bleaching in the sun near Wichita memorialized the triumph of civilization.¹

For many small farmers, however, the realities of survival often contradicted the ideologies of progress. Farming, like mining, is a risky business under any circumstances. Successful farmers with adequate capital can lower the risks but still seem dependent on Lady Luck to see them through season after season. In Kansas and adjacent states on the high plains, luck ran out in the early 1870s. A series of droughts and grasshopper invasions ruined the crops and devastated the lives of thousands of marginal farmers. Set adrift by desertification and poverty, many returned to their eastern homelands, abandoning their farms or selling out for whatever they could get.²

The Mortimores Turn Westward

David Mortimore and his family faced the same Hobson’s choice as their Kansas neighbors. The amount of cultivated cropland in 1875 shrank by 2,000 acres in Anderson County alone, where David and Sarah had settled a decade earlier. Life was unpredictable, as Sarah well knew after losing four children in the ten years they lived there. One of her neighbors reinforced that somber notion in a letter Sarah summarized later. After “One of their Gray horses Died,” she told her daughter, “they have plenty of Corn [because] the hoppers did not hurt anything much but wheat but she said they might Catch it in the spring.” David’s father was dead and his mother lived near his older brother William, so David had no reason either to stay in Kansas or return to Iowa. He opted instead to go west, this time all the way to the West Coast.³

No longer a vague landscape of high mountains and hostile deserts, the Far West by the 1870s was a known commodity, offering a variety of attractions for tourist and settler alike. Though transcontinental rails did not reach Puget Sound until 1883, immigrants had mi-

grated westward along the Oregon Trail since the 1830s. The Oregon country was ripe for progressive development after the Civil War. As environmentalist Bill Robbins has written, WASP values came to the Willamette Valley with the first wave of Midwestern immigrants, who replaced the Native Americans, cut the forests, plowed the fields, killed the “varmint,” destroyed the natural ecology, and changed the landscape. By the 1860s farmers considered the land a mere commodity, and government at every level cooperated in its development, furthering the myth of unlimited abundance and the progressive growth of civilization.⁴

The Oregon Trail was also the best route to California before 1869, when Chinese and Irish labor gangs raced each other along the 45th parallel to cross the Sierra Nevada and complete the first central overland line. The Golden State had passed its hectic Gold Rush days by the 1870s but a new Age of Agriculture was dawning. Private investors, land companies, railroads, and other promoters were advertising worldwide for immigrants who could buy land for as little as \$5 to \$10 an acre, and who, according to the ads, could turn a profit with very little investment or effort. Both state and federal governments did more than their share of promoting by offering inducements of various kinds, including free land, bonuses, and tax incentives for reclamation projects or other developments.

By the mid-1870s, then, the Mortimores had a choice of locations and routes to follow, but first they had to decide where to go and what to do once they got there. From letters written a few months after their journey, it is clear that their decisions were influenced less by geography and economics than by their own family and friends. Historian Malcolm Rohrbough found social networking to be important components of Gold Rush society. But social networks are based on emotional bonds, not rational analysis. The feelings of relatives and friends weighed heavily in both decisions to leave for the gold fields and plans to return home. Emotions also affected the decisions of migrating farm families, but those the migrants left behind had less influence than those waiting at the other end. Once the household head decided to leave he didn’t plan to move back.⁵

A number of families the Mortimores had known in Iowa preceded their move westward. In a previous chapter we recounted the untimely death of David Mortimore's sister Elizabeth in 1862 on a lonely stretch of the Oregon Trail. Her husband, Thomas Paul, took the rest of his family on to the Oregon country and later remarried. In the 1870s he was living in Walla Walla, Washington Territory, within a community of friends and relatives from Iowa who had all arrived on the same wagon train. Nearby lived John Reid and his wife, Harriet, Thomas Paul's daughter. Down the street was Thomas's brother Joseph and his family. The Paul and Reid families in Walla Walla together had at least sixteen children of various ages.

The Scott family had also been on the same wagon train that brought the Paul and Reid families to the Pacific Northwest in 1862. During the trip, discussed in a previous chapter, Hamilton Scott kept a diary that details and supplements the reminiscences of Ellen Paul Garlington. Some of the Scotts apparently had moved on to California by the 1870s, where Frank Scott found work as a woodcutter in Placer County.

All of these families were raised in similar circumstances, and all joined an active social network that relied heavily on writing letters to communicate. We get a revealing glimpse of Mortimore life and times from a group of eleven letters written in the early months of 1877 by Sarah Jane and five of her six living children: Mary Elizabeth, Emma Louiza, Sarah Evaline, Edward Merrit Fenton, and Elma Craig ("Ella"). Elma had married Perry Surface the year before but was still living at the Mortimore home with her husband at the time. None of the Miller or Paul letters to the Mortimores have survived, but the Mortimore letters mention the Paul, Reid, and Scott families. All were addressed to Roxena Jane Miller and her husband, Elias Martin Miller, who were married in Kansas in 1874. Roxena, David and Hanna's eldest daughter, had two children in quick succession, but by 1877 had fallen victim to a debilitating illness that worried her family and eventually took her life.⁶

The presence of these friends and relatives on the West Coast made it easier for David Mortimore and his family to leave Kansas. It also gave them an occupational alternative to farming. Although specific times and places are missing, from textual clues in these letters we can

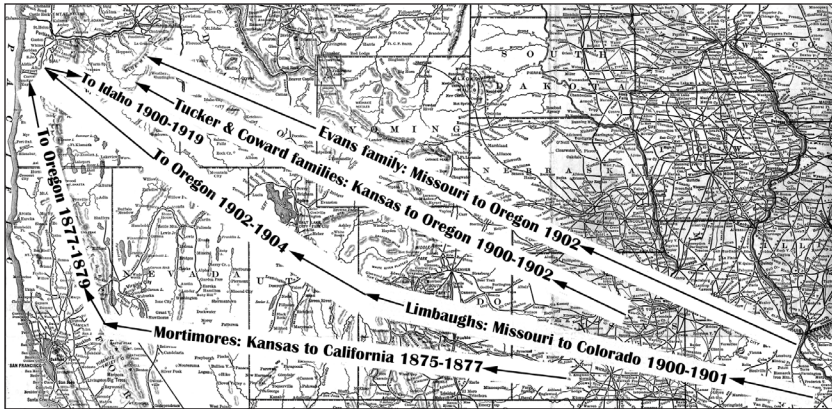


Figure 19 Family Routes to the Far West

Adapted from "General Map of the Pennsylvania Railroad and Its Connections," 1893, in Library of Congress Geography and Map Division.

construct a chronology that fills in the gaps of the Mortimore family record from the time they left Kansas to their eventual settlement in Oregon. Sometime after 1 March 1875—the date of their last appearance in the Kansas state census—they came West on the train all the way to California. Lured by land offers and letters from the Scotts or other Midwestern friends who were already there, they most likely boarded the Kansas Pacific spur at Wichita and arrived on the Southern Pacific at Sacramento. From there, they traveled northeast, eventually locating in Lincoln, thirteen miles north of Auburn in the heart of the Mother Lode. This was grazing and timberland rather than farmland, but some tracts were open to homesteaders. At any rate, wood was free for the taking and the Mortimores became a family of woodcutters.

Before the widespread availability of oil and coal on the West Coast, wood was in great demand, both for construction and fuel. American loggers cleared over 151 million acres of forest from 1860 to 1910, amounting to an estimated 3 billion cords of wood. An average 19th-century family needed 17.5 cords of wood to keep warm in winter. On public lands in the mountains and foothills west of the Cascades and the Sierra Nevada, timberland was open to the public almost without restriction. For families with limited means but strong backs, cutting and selling firewood provided a quick cash crop.⁷

Despite the high demand for their services, pioneer loggers had an unsavory reputation. Woodcutters and their families lived on the fringes of settlement, often squatting on public lands to exploit the timber resources, and then moving on to new areas, leaving a massacred landscape behind. They spent little time with soap and water or other creature comforts, building crude cabins and hunting game for food. Whether single or married, individual loggers could be boisterous and foul-mouthed, heavy drinkers and rowdy fighters. Some wives worked alongside their husbands, leaving their kids to fend for themselves. The rough-and-tumble nature of their lives puzzled some observers and disgusted the social elite, who thought all squatters were degraded and lazy.⁸

The Mortimores were themselves offended by the rough edges of woodcutter society, but they were too broke to move on. With a large family and an exhausted pocketbook, David needed to build up another nest egg before he could find a better alternative. While most of the family stayed in Lincoln, Roxena and Elias Miller were the first to leave, possibly joining their relatives in Walla Walla before heading to the Willamette Valley. By 1876 Roxena's frail condition had worsened after the birth of their second child. She spent much of her time bed-ridden, with a Bible and a concordance as close companions. The concordance has survived, with the front and end pages filled with notes and doodles—useful clues in themselves to help date and document her life. More important are the vital statistics she included—perhaps the only detailed record of the births, deaths, and marriages of the families of Thomas Paul and David Mortimore.

For the rest of the Mortimores, the realities of life in California bore little relation to the promotional literature. Hard work was the order of the day for every able-bodied family member, including Edward, or Eddie, as his sisters called him. He was twelve in 1877, two years older than his sister Eva. By that time their father David had decided to go into the lumber business, taking firewood either from homestead lands or from nearby timberlands owned by the Central Pacific Railroad, which held alternate 640-acre sections up to forty miles on each side of the tracks. Those generous grants, which Congress had provided in

1862 and 1864 to spur construction of a transcontinental line, aroused the ire of small entrepreneurs all over the country. It did not seem at all improper, and certainly not evil in the sight of the Lord, to take timber from the rich in order to sustain the poor.

Wood could also be harvested from government lands. The intent of the Homestead Act was to encourage legitimate farmers to secure free land direct from the government without having to purchase it secondhand from speculators. Settlers could obtain fee simple title within five years if, during the interim between filing and “proving up,” they worked the land, built a home on it, and gave every indication they intended to remain permanently. The law had several shortcomings, however, which made it possible for anyone who desired to defy the original intent. A settler could squat on the land, take out preliminary papers, remove all the timber on his tract, and then leave anytime without actually filing for a title. The “commutation” clause was another loophole. It allowed the original claimant to purchase title to the land for a minimum price of \$1.25 per acre within six months of entry.

Rather than helping landless farmers who theoretically were supposed to benefit by the act, the commutation clause was a great boon to speculators who never intended to live on the claim. Not wanting to wait five years to get the land free, and figuring to profit from rising demand for good land in the western valleys, speculators or their hirelings paid the minimum price and waited for market value to rise. By this means most of the good land available under Homestead entry was already encumbered long before actual “homesteaders” arrived. A more serious fault was the lack of a provision by which land not legitimately entered could be returned to government hands. Without such protection, the government had no way to prevent scofflaws from exploiting the resource and then moving on, leaving a scarred memento of their greed behind. But greed was compatible with progress. Not even devout Methodists like the Mortimores saw a moral contradiction between capitalist exploitation and Christian stewardship. To a 19th-century Protestant, man and nature were in perpetual conflict, and if man conquered nature, it was with God’s blessing.

Given these cultural values it is not difficult to understand the Mortimore woodcutting activities near Lincoln in 1877. At \$4.50 per cord, one man—even a boy of twelve—could earn at least a modest wage chopping timber to feed the boilers of the mills, locomotives, and steamboats of Northern California. A typical day began before daylight, as David rose to round up the horses while Sarah Jane and the children milked the three cows, cooked breakfast, and started the day's washing, baking, and mending, then snatched a moment to write a letter to sister Roxena. After breakfast David, young Eddie and Ella's husband, Perry, harnessed the team to a wagon, loaded the axes and saws and rode out to the mixed conifer and hardwood forests along the Sierra foothills. Eddie became so proficient that he could cut a cord of wood in three days and he proudly informed his older sister of the fact. Perry Surface did better, of course; in less than a month he had fifteen cords ready to sell for an expected profit of \$75, despite a sprained foot he suffered after a log fell on it early in March.

At the end of the workday, the three weary woodcutters hitched up the team and rode back to the Mortimore cabin. After supper, Eddie and his father frequently hunted wild hogs in the nearby thickets. The elder Mortimore evidently was a good shot, for within a month he had bagged at least three animals weighing over 150 pounds each. After dark, with all the chores done, the Bible read, and the prayers said, David often closed the day by leading the family in song that he accompanied on the accordion. The family could not afford much time for relaxation, though, for another big day of work "for the Lord" lay ahead.

The Lord's work had its vicissitudes. Although Perry eventually filed for a Homestead claim in order to cut timber "legitimately," most of the wood they took from railroad land and sold it, a wagonload at a time, in Lincoln or other nearby towns, possibly on occasion to the very company that owned the timber. For the first few months of 1877 business seemed good and David decided to hire a crew to add to this family workforce. It was not long before he regretted his decision. Mary Elizabeth wrote her sister that the hired hands were nothing but a shiftless pack of "theaves, card players and gamblers" who worked

press for
Eda
February 6th 1877
Lincoln Placer Co California
Ever Dear Brother & Sister
I endeavor to try to answer your kind letter
which we read with interest we are still grunting
a little but we are not at all bad, and I do hope
and pray this will find you enjoying the best of
health, you say there is wicked people in Oregon
we don't expect to find them all Christians
any place but if there is any Christians at all
it will look & be more like home I tell you
we had good meetings in Mo just before we came
away and the folks was so good to, I never
went home for almost a week, I just went over
to the school house, and they would not let me
go home, we lived about a mile or two from the
school house, Mr Wallaces are splendid people
I do wish they would come and go with us
to Oregon, I think they will they talk of it
I am so nervous I cant hardly write
I have been washing, I washed for Ella as
she is not very stout. I washed 63 sixty three

Figure 20 From California to Oregon: Sister to Sister

Three years after she and her husband, Elias Miller, left for the Oregon country, Roxina received this chatty letter from her younger sister Mary, who was writing from a woodcutter's camp in Lincoln, California.



Figure 21 The Tucker Sisters

John and Louisa Tucker had five children, but only three—Martha, Pearl, and Frances—lived beyond childhood. Here they are as young adults in the mid-1890s, still in Kansas but about to venture West. All three married Oregon homesteaders.

slowly and ate more than they were worth in provisions. After nearly a month's employment with only eight cords of wood to show for their labors, the crew was summarily fired. But that was not the end of them. Soon after David "turned them off," wrote Mary, "another man hired them and they are now working close to Elma's house until she can't leave home for any thing for they are such theaves they have already taken some of Perry's boards."⁹

Labor troubles were not the only Mortimore problems that spring. The roof fell in on the lumber business in mid-March, and Sarah Jane dutifully reported the news to her daughter:

Well we are out of work the Rail Road agents have came around and forbidden any one on such lands to cut any more Pa seen them today & had to promise not to work any more on it or pay for what he had done they have no rite to this land & cant sell an acre of it neither can they get a cent for the wood only they try to scare men & some will pay them one dollar per cord for it but Pa wont have any trouble with them Perry is on Government land & they have nothing to do with that I guess we can file on a piece of Government land & get the wood off a while we are here it is handy we will hear next week about it.¹⁰

But the Mortimores did not file for a homestead claim. They felt insecure in California's secular society. The climate and the land were

fine, but their letters to Oregon ominously and frequently referred to the wickedness that surrounded them. Although specifics were left unmentioned, presumably wickedness meant vice in all its forms: gambling, drinking, and prostitution were the most prominent in the Mother Lode towns, although opium smoking and general hell-raising were not far behind. California was still only a generation away from the boisterous Gold Rush era, and even though much of the ore was gone the aura of reckless freedom lingered on. Oregon wasn't altogether chaste, as Sarah noted after reading a letter from Roxena: "you say their is wicked people in Oregon. we dont expect to find them all Christian's any place but if their is any Christians at all it will look & be more like home."¹¹

So long as the reward was family reunion, Sarah could face the uncertainties. For weeks she had her heart set on moving to Oregon to be with ailing Roxena and her two children. Roxena's sisters talked constantly of seeing each other in order to tend to the infants, complete quilting and other sewing projects, and simply enjoy the companionship of family and friends. The entire family was ready to move that spring, and only lack of immediate cash and sufficient provisions prevented the trip. Certainly the thought of remaining in California any longer than absolutely necessary was almost unbearable. The last California document, dated 23 March 1877, ends with continued expectations, but an empty purse made travel plans indefinite.

The Tucker Family in Kansas

While the Mortimores were still planning to leave southeastern Kansas, the Tucker and Coward families came together in southwestern Kansas. As described in an earlier chapter, Louisa Coward Hackler became John Tucker's wife in Wichita on 3 March 1874, and they settled on a homestead in nearby Winfield.

After the Civil War the southern Kansas frontier filled in a hurry as prairie lands were occupied and plowed. Wichita and Dodge City lived a hectic but brief existence in the 1870s as cow towns, and then declined as railroads brought in "nesters" who proceeded to fence their homesteads and put an end to the open-range cattle industry. But, as

we have seen, a series of droughts and grasshopper plagues devastated farmland from Texas to Canada, leaving thousands of farmers with virtually nothing more than the clothes on their backs. The worst was over by 1877, but the economic effects lingered for years. Farm indebtedness rose rapidly in the 1880s while homestead entries declined; new natural disasters and declining international markets for farm produce in the 1880s combined to handicap farmers on the Great Plains.

The Tuckers lived through these troubling times and started a family in the midst of drought and grasshoppers. Martha Elizabeth Tucker was born at Winfield, 1 June 1875. Two years later a second child arrived; he was named William Newton. After another year of hardscrabble farming, with two children to raise and another on the way, John and Louisa left their homestead without waiting to prove up. They settled seventy miles farther west at Kingman, where their second daughter, Laura Pearl, was born in 1878. Kingman was more of a wide spot in the road than a town, with a population in 1876 of only twenty-five permanent residents. The newness of the area suggests that fresh farming opportunities brought John Tucker there. This part of southern Kansas was in the middle of the Corn Belt, although in a few years winter wheat production would outstrip corn as the leading crop. Despite its vulnerability to drought and locusts, corn was easier for frontier farmers to grow than wheat. It could be planted by chopping a hole in the tough prairie sod, which had to be “busted” with a plow in order to sow wheat. Corn was also good meal for both man and beast, while wheat was not considered satisfactory animal food. If you ran out of buffalo chips, and if prices were bad, you could also use corn for fuel.¹²

For nearly a decade the Tuckers stayed on the Kingman farm, raising corn and kids—or trying to, at least. Their family grew by the addition of Rebecca Frances (1880), Annie May (1882), and Benjamin Arthur (1886). The latter two died in infancy, and their remaining son, Newton, died in 1898 at the age of twenty-one. Newton Tucker, the father of John, also died sometime in the late 1870s or early 1880s and his widow moved in with her children. Existence it was, but the American Dream meant more than mere survival. Even the weather was inhospitable.

table—though not unexpected in what has become known as Tornado Alley. In her old age I remember Martha fearfully recalling the howl of a twister that seemed about to lift the door of the root cellar where everybody had run for shelter. Her chronic fear of lightning also derived from her frightening childhood memories on the Kansas prairie.

For emotional support in stressful times, the Tuckers turned closer to religion. Faith was a comforting substitute for affluence. They left the Methodists behind in 1883 and joined the evangelical Free Methodist Church. Southern Kansas was aflame with religious populism in these years. Between 1870 and 1895 a number of Methodist groups broke away from established congregations. Slavery had divided the church before the Civil War, but postwar internal disputes stemmed from doctrinal and regional distinctions. Free Methodists took up the banner of Holiness, or Sanctification, from John Wesley's doctrine that once a sinner was forgiven his soul still needed purification to live in a true state of grace. Historian Roger Robins also points to emergent class distinctions between the "plain folk" of the rural South and West, and the rising urban-industrial middle class in the North and East. He claims that "the most important tensions within Methodism were increasingly related to class as much as region." Similar tensions affected the Nazarenes, who formed a separate evangelical movement in the 1890s. Like the Free Methodists, the Nazarenes emphasized Holiness, but neither church adopted the Pentecostal practice of speaking in tongues.¹³

Martha Tucker grew up in the midst of this Free Methodist expansion, and her outlook on life was profoundly influenced by Free Methodist doctrines. Over the next decade, as political and religious populism converged in the farm states, the Tucker home was a regular stop for itinerant Free Methodist preachers and devout laymen. Prayers and readings emphasizing Justification, Holiness, and Sanctification became part of the daily religious fare at the Tucker household. The earliest existing fragment of her writings is a poem about the death of her infant brother, Benjamin Arthur. It suggests both the maturity that resulted from a hard life on the plains and the strong religious convictions she was already beginning to develop as an impressionis-

tic eleven-year-old. Six months later she expressed similar thoughts in another poem written after her infant cousin, Charles Coward, died. "O tis so lonely now," she wrote. "Our only babe has gone. / We've nothing to cheer us now / But Lord thy will be done.... / He's shining now in glory / Praising the God above / Dwelling with the Angels / With joy and peace and love."¹⁴

Under Free Methodism Martha and the rest of the Tucker family enjoyed a rich harvest of spiritual food, but the body needed other sustenance. Economic conditions in Kansas grew worse instead of better, and in 1891 John Tucker pulled up stakes. For the next five years the family drifted from settlement to settlement in search of better opportunities. They stopped at Hutchinson for a few months, and then moved east to Neosho Rapids. After the bottom fell out of the national economy in the Panic of 1893 and the depression that followed, the Tuckers moved to Stafford, Missouri—perhaps at the urging of the Cowards. But in less than a year they were back in Kansas, first stopping at Langdon, and then settling at Nickerson on the Arkansas River. For a brief time John crossed into Indian Territory, evidently at the urging of the government, to teach farming to the Indians, but the pay was poor and he was not there long.

By 1897 all the Tuckers were near Hutchinson. Without adequate family records it is difficult to follow these moves with any precision, much less explain them. We must be content with the thought that the Tucker story was not unusual, for the Farm Problem was a national economic disorder that provided the major impetus for the Populist Revolt of the 1890s. Like thousands of other marginal farmers, the Tuckers were victims of overproduction, falling prices, unpredictable weather conditions, a credit squeeze, and high transportation costs. Relief for the western farmer did not come until after the turn of the century.

The education of the Tucker girls was constantly interrupted by these family moves. Martha began school at Kingman in the late 1880s. When the family went to Neosho Falls in 1892 she entered a "female seminary," presumably a private grammar school, but was there only a year. After the brief sojourn to Missouri Martha reentered grammar

school at Kingman and finally received her diploma in 1894 at age nineteen. By that time she had decided to become a teacher, but lacking the money to enroll in normal school she had to go to work instead. Jobs for young ladies were scarce in southern Kansas, and as a last resort she took a position as cook in Fort Scott near the Missouri border. After a year there Martha returned to Hutchinson, discouraged and penniless. Not being able to continue her education was a profound disappointment, for she was full of youthful inquiry and eager to learn. By that time she had also drifted away somewhat from the confining doctrines of Free Methodism and had formed new friends outside the church. For a time she was particularly interested in Charles Lamb, an impecunious youth with romantic inclinations whom she had met when the family was in Stafford, Missouri. In 1896 he went to Chicago to see the sights and tried to get Martha to follow. “Charlie” turned out to be something less than a gentleman, it seems, for in a later letter he confessed that he had not been “a good boy” and had run out of money. He did not elaborate, but certain inferences may be drawn from his closing remarks: “Oh! how I wish I knew as little of the vices of this world as an unborn babe.”

Martha’s letters to him have not been recovered, but it seems safe to assume she had nothing further to do with him after his northern misadventures. Nevertheless the relationship is instructive, for it demonstrates that she was not entirely immune from the pleasures of the temporal world. This is not to say that she forsook the teachings of Free Methodism. Rather, she entered a period of nagging uncertainty about her own future, and her experience with the prodigal Lamb probably forced her to evaluate the basic premises of the church. Free Methodism was an austere faith that frowned on such earthly temptations as fancy clothes, jewelry, and cosmetics, not to mention the mortal perils of dancing, drinking, smoking, and passionate love before marriage. Could an attractive, intelligent, outgoing girl in the prime of life forego all the fascinations of a highly materialistic society?¹⁵

While Martha struggled with this question, B.M. Roberts, one of the founding fathers of Free Methodism, published a major treatise on Holiness. Although I cannot be certain, Martha must have read it

thoroughly. A copy of the work in my possession came from the family collection, and an inscription inside the front cover resembles Martha's handwriting. At any rate, Martha was deeply affected by the theology of "Brother Roberts," and a passage from the book will serve to illustrate the tenor of his thought:

Resolve that you will be holy. Ask God to search you! If, in the light of the Spirit, you see, as is often the case, that you are not justified, have the courage and honesty to confess your condition. If in a backslidden state you seek for holiness, you will, in all probability, take up with something short of reality. Be thorough! Confess as fully as the word and the Spirit of God direct. Give yourself up without the least reserve to obey the Lord in everything.¹⁶

As if Brother Roberts were speaking to her personally, Martha agonized over the problems of personal sin and salvation. In a remarkable confession probably written in 1897, she recounted her soul-searching and her ultimate decision to "give up the world for Jesus":

When 14 years of age the Lord wonderfully saved me, soon after I sought and obtained the blessing of holiness. But I have not been living a Christian since. I have been backslidden and reclaimed several times. Last fall the Lord wonderfully convicted me while a F.M. minister was praying for me. I was unable to shake the conviction off. For 2 months I had a real battle. I wanted to be a Christian, but I didn't want to give up the world in every form and go with the despised F.M.'s. But I realized I was of all men most miserable. I had not peace day or night. I would sometimes wake up crying and calling on God. I tried to hide my conviction but didn't succeed very well. I know the pilgrims were praying for me. So I finally yielded myself to God and he restored unto me the joy of His salvation.¹⁷



Figure 22 Martha Mortimore with the Cline Family

Six feet tall, Martha Mortimore towered over her charges in this photo of the R. H. Cline family, taken in Kansas just before they left for Oregon. Reverend Cline was one of two Free Methodist preachers sent to Oregon in 1897 to strengthen a growing mission field. Martha went along as governess to the Cline and Helsel children.

This was a momentous turning point. The “despised F.M.’s,” who evidently had been pressuring Martha to give up thoughts of a secular teaching career, won her over completely and she agreed to dedicate her life to church work. In the sectarian terms of the day, she had found her calling and was now ready to serve the Lord wherever and whenever He might direct.¹⁸

Not coincidentally, all the signs pointed westward. Free Methodist missionaries had arrived in Washington Territory as early as 1876. Supported by the eastern Free Methodist establishment, Pacific Northwest satellite organizations grew steadily. In 1880 Washington became a separate district, and Walla Walla received its first Free Methodist pastor. Two years later the Oregon Territorial district was established, with Clackamas County leading the way. By 1884 the Clackamas membership was larger than Seattle’s. Despite resistance from nondenominational Holiness groups who felt threatened, the Free Methodist cam-

paign marched ahead under a banner of “education and discipline.” By 1896 the church’s West Coast division totaled thirty-nine districts, forty-five preachers, and 838 members. Flushed with success, the Annual Conference divided the Pacific Northwest into three separate conferences, one each for Washington and Oregon west of the Cascades, and a separate Columbia River Conference for everything left of the old Oregon Country east of the Cascades, including Idaho.¹⁹

In the summer of 1897 Martha fully committed to the Holiness life when two Free Methodist ministers in Kansas, the Reverends R.H. Cline and A. Helsel, both friends of the Tucker family, decided to bolster the growing mission field in Oregon. She didn’t hesitate when they asked her to join the expedition. As a strong, robust young woman with both church and family experience, she would be useful not only to witness for the Lord but also to serve as housekeeper, nurse, traveling companion for the preachers’ wives, and governess for their children. Perhaps it was the discussion of Oregon that inspired Martha’s introspective essay quoted above. At any rate she accepted the offer even though she had never been far from her parents before.

By October 1897 the preparations had been completed and Martha boarded the train at Kingman with the Cline and Helsel families. A group of friends came to the station to see them off and to tease them about the twenty-seven parcels of all shapes and sizes they packed aboard. As the train pulled out those who stayed behind bid farewell and sang “Farther On,” while those on board wept “tears of sorrow.” The somber mood did not last long, for most of the travelers were too excited to be homesick.

Martha’s description of the trip has survived, and we can follow the adventures of the travelers as they made their way along the route. Her travelogue is filled with glowing descriptions of the scenery: Pike’s Peak, which looked so near at Colorado Springs that Brother Cline wanted to walk over to it during the fifteen minutes while the train refueled; Royal Gorge, with its sheer walls and suspension bridges high overhead; the Wasatch Mountains and the Great Salt Lake; the Columbia River Gorge, which whizzed by dizzily as the train sped along at sixty miles per hour. As they traveled the women sang hymns and

the ministers preached, leading other passengers to mistake them for Mormons. Naively Martha described “wild Indians” along the tracks and somewhat dubiously wrote of the wonders of Mormonism with its huge temples and “golden statues.”

The discomforts of train travel were somewhat offset by the new friends they made. After a restless first night in a coach seat, Martha took up an offer from a kindly old woman to join her the next night in a Pullman car. But after three or four hours crowded next to the wall in an upper berth with the elderly lady, whose 200 pounds needed all the space possible, Martha was near hysterics. The third day she spent nursing a sick comrade, and that night she sat across from a friendly Danish lad who liked female companionship. Before the night was over each had their feet on the chairs of the other, and the new friends were quite chummy when the trip finally came to an end in Portland. After almost a week on the train, Martha and her Free Methodist companions had arrived in their new mission field. Doubtless she felt some anxiety as she faced an uncertain future in an unfamiliar land 1,500 miles from home.²⁰

The Mortimore–Tucker Nexus

Twenty years before Martha Tucker took her train ride to Portland, her future husband was preparing for a 500-mile wagon ride to the same area. Twelve-year-old Eddie, who had a way with horses, helped drive the team as the Mortimore family left Lincoln, California, late in 1877, heading for the Willamette Valley. They stopped for the winter in Susanville, California, where the men could find logging jobs as day laborers and rebuild the family’s travel fund. When spring came and the snow melted they repacked the wagons and followed the old Applegate Trail north to Clackamas County, just up the Willamette River from Portland. There Eddie’s father, David, took up a homestead, but misfortune dogged the Mortimores. Death soon took Roxena, the eldest sister, and then her mother, Sarah Jane. David lost a hand in a logging accident. He married again in 1883, but six years later his second wife died. Giving up the homestead, he turned in later life to his children for support. As the years went by he became more dependent and

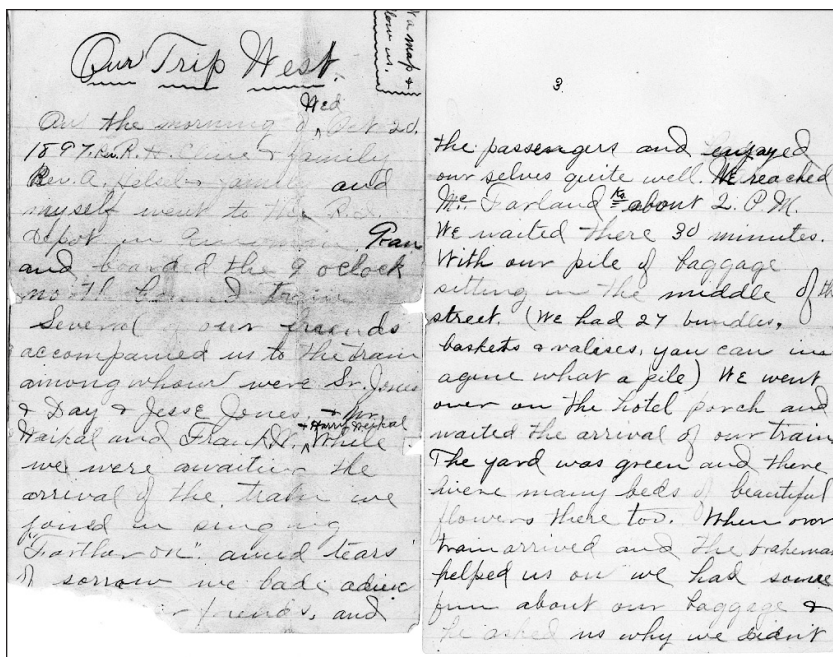


Figure 23 "Our Trip West"

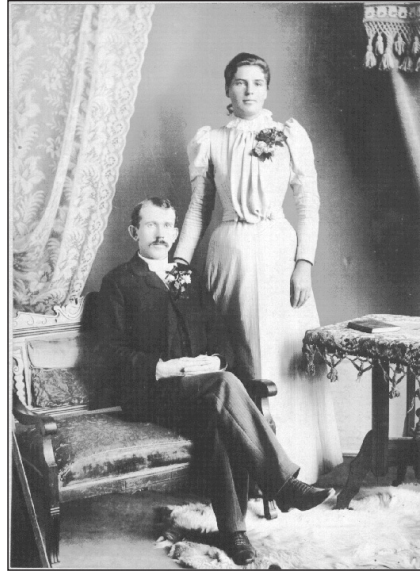
Two pages of Martha Mortimore's lively reminiscence, written shortly after her 1897 adventure on an immigrant train from Kansas to Oregon. She was a devout Free Methodist when she agreed to accompany two F.M. preachers and their families to a new mission field in the Willamette Valley. Along the way she saw "carloads of gold and silver ore" from Cripple Creek, a "golden angel with a trumpet" on top of the Mormon Temple in Salt Lake City, and "Indians in their uncivilized state" in northern Utah. Still single at age twenty-two, she had a chummy but brief encounter with a "gentleman" traveler on his way to the Klondike, but he disappeared and a year later, after settling in Portland, she married a widowed harness maker and part-time F.M. preacher.

more demanding, but his family shared the burden of his care until he died at Oregon City in 1905.

In the meantime, young Edward grew to manhood on his father's farm near Molalla, forty miles south of Portland. When David didn't need him he worked for a nearby rancher driving mules. He was just eighteen in 1883 when his father brought home a new wife, Alsa Hugben. She was a widow with a fifteen-year-old daughter, Hattie, whom Eddie must have found irresistible. Two weeks later wedding bells rang again. Now with a wife of his own to support, Edward left the home-

**Figure 24 Mortimore-Tucker
Wedding Portrait**

After a three-month courtship, Edward Merrit Fenton Mortimore married Martha Tucker in Portland, 14 May 1898. The photographer masked Martha's height in this formal studio portrait by seating Edward, who was nearly six inches shorter.



stead to work for wages in Oregon City. For the next decade he earned a meager living as a day laborer and ranchhand, occasionally venturing into eastern Oregon to round up wild horses, which he trained and sold in the Willamette Valley. He was a gifted horseman but lacked sufficient capital and business skills to make it a fulltime profession.

Sometime in the early 1890s Edward and his family came under the influence of the Free Methodist surge in Clackamas County. Though he had been raised a devout Methodist by his mother, his religious fervor had dimmed during his youthful cowboy days, but it resurfaced after he went to work for W. C. Willey, a Free Methodist stableman and harnessmaker. One of the most important Holiness leaders in the area was B. F. Smalley, a Missouri minister who had moved to Oregon during the expansion period and helped organize the newly established Oregon Conference.

Smalley's influence was apparent at the time of Hattie's death in 1894 from tuberculosis after a long illness. Her loss left Edward with two children to raise, Merton (born 1887) and Olive (1889). At the funeral friends and family both volunteered to help. Olive later remembered that she had lived with two aunts for a short period, then moved in with the Greens, a childless Free Methodist couple in Oregon City.

She thought that they “had the idea of adoption” because they “bought me all kinds of pretty clothes.” But Olive didn’t like them because they didn’t like Merton, who was old enough to stay with his grandfather Mortimore and tend to his needs. The Greens said that “boys were dirty,” Olive recalled. “The only person they let me play with,” she said, “was Preacher Smalley’s daughter Cary.”²¹

While the children went to live with relatives and friends, Edward made saddles and spent his leisure hours with church and the Bible. Encouraged by his Free Methodist friends, he began to preach part-time. Substituting for regular ministers, his volunteer work took him out of Oregon City and enlarged his circle of acquaintances. At one meeting late in 1897 or early 1898 he met a tall young lady from Kansas who had recently come west on a Free Methodist mission. She lived in Portland, easy to reach from Oregon City by suburban electric street-car. The tone of his extant letters, beginning 25 February 1898, with “kind friend,” and proceeding in a matter of weeks to “My Darling Martha,” suggests a rapid progression of their courtship. They were married in Portland on 14 May 1898, finally bringing together two migrating families who had started west on separate paths a half-century before. Martha’s Kansas relatives soon arrived to take up homesteads in central Oregon, completing the Tucker trek.

The Tuckers and Mortimores followed thousands of other families across the continent after the Civil War in search of the elusive American Dream. Only a fraction of the seekers found what they were looking for. The more we study family history, the closer we come to the “real West,” the West that is so often overshadowed by heroic popular literature in whatever form. Perhaps by looking into our own family backgrounds we can not only rediscover our roots but also better understand the dynamics of social development in a formative period of American history.

Oregon or Bust, 1890–1920

Preparing to Leave Missouri

Low clouds of summer dust, stirred by the pony's gait, drifted under the floorboards of the buggy and settled on the shoes of the passengers as they slowed to turn into the lane leading to the farmhouse. They had been on the road nearly two hours, and the children were hot and restless. They were also excited, for they had finally arrived at their cousin's farm. For weeks they had heard folks talk about the big event, and now it had come at last. As they neared the house the sturdy woman in a plain print dress and bonnet tugged on the reins, slowing the pony to a walk and steering clear of the other rigs tied along the fence. One of the men ahead kindly directed her to a corral off the main path and unhitched her horse so it could be haltered and watered. She had all she could do to keep her two kids in tow as they jumped to the ground and ran toward the growing crowd.

After a century of residence in southeast Missouri, some members of the Limbaugh family began to look elsewhere. Since moving from Bollinger County in 1894, John W. Limbaugh and his family had lived on a farm near Roberts School on Byrd's Creek in Cape Girardeau County. Now it was the late summer of 1900, and "Johnny," as his Missouri relatives called him, along with his wife, Mary Catherine (Cook)

and nine of his ten living children, were leaving for Colorado as soon as they could settle their accounts. Everything not movable by buckboard and freight wagon to the train station had to go, including farm implements and real estate.

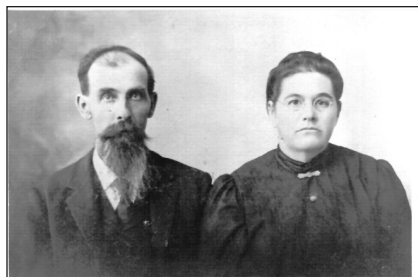
While adults in the crowd followed the bidding their children gathered in a field to play. Among them was eight-year-old Rush Hudson Limbaugh, the youngest of the late Joseph Limbaugh's four sons. He and his mother, Susan, as well as his brother Burette, had driven thirteen miles from their Bollinger County farm to say farewell to Joseph's nephew Johnny and his family. Rush had played together with Elzia and Hadley Limbaugh, Johnny's two youngest sons, when their father's farms were side by side in Bollinger County. Now they frolicked in the empty pasture, not realizing that this would be the last they would ever see of each other. Though a year older, Rush outlived his second cousin Hadley by more than forty years.¹

At the time of the sale, Johnny's younger brother Moses was already in Colorado. Why he left Missouri, and why his brother followed, are not readily apparent. No "smoking gun" in the form of contemporary letters or other direct evidence has been found. Pauline (Schadt) Limbaugh, who married Johnny's son Pony in 1904 at Grand Junction, could not come up with a good explanation when I interviewed her many years later: "Just got tired of Missouri, I guess." But the historian's *raison d'être* is understanding and explaining what happened and why. To do that first requires some background.²

Close in age as well as lifestyles, the two elder sons of John P. Limbaugh were too young to fight in the Civil War. When the war started the boys were nine and four, respectively, living with their parents on property adjacent to their grandfather Daniel's large farm. After Daniel's sudden death in 1862 his widow and children shared equally in Daniel's estate. John P. built on his inheritance, buying more land and putting his own sons to work as farm laborers—repeating the same cycle of family farming he and his brothers knew well under their own father. By the end of the Civil War, John P. owned in excess of 300 acres, not including his father's inheritance. In the postwar years he turned from farming to speculation, subdividing and selling land at inflated

Figure 25 John W. and Mary Catherine Limbaugh

A studio portrait of John W. Limbaugh and his wife, Mary Catherine (Cook), about 1905, after they left Colorado for Oregon. She died the next year in a Salem hospital.



prices. He had 160 acres left when he died in 1891. On his deathbed he drew up a will leaving his personal property to his five living children and placing his remaining real property in trust for his youngest son George. George was twenty-two and married at that time, but he had little enthusiasm for farm life. The trust terms required him to live on the acreage for at least three years and care for his mother Elizabeth. In 1895, free of trust restrictions, he sold the land to his uncle Joseph and left rural Missouri. Later he went to medical school and built a family practice in Dunklin County.³

George's desire for change perhaps explains why his father appointed as trustees his older brothers, John W. and Moses. In 1891 both were independent farmers living on adjacent farms across the creek from their father's homestead. Both had large families—eleven children each!—almost as if they were competing with each other for bragging rights. They had married two sisters, Mary Catherine and Frances Cook. The women were also their first cousins, the daughters of Lauraney Limbaugh and George Benjamin Cook.⁴

After farming next to each other for twenty years, in the mid-1890s both Moses and John W. left Bollinger County for good. In 1894 John W. sold his Bollinger property and settled on a 288-acre tract in Cape Girardeau County purchased from an heir of the Byrd family. A year later Moses moved to Madison County, where his wife's parents were still living. Their reasons for moving are obscure. George's departure for medical school may have loosened his older brothers' ties to the family farm, and depressed farm prices in the decade may have jeopardized their farming livelihood. Poor farm income perhaps explains why both brothers over the years developed practical sidelines—Moses

as accountant and John W. as carpenter. There is also a hint of politics behind Moses' brief career as Bollinger County tax collector. Appointed in 1895, he held the job less than a year.

Buying land in Byrd Township brought John W. Limbaugh's family close to friends and shirtsleeve relatives with children about the same age. The location, near Roberts School just four miles northwest of Jackson, was close to the farms of the Delph and Evans families. We introduced them in chapter 6. Jacob and Morgania Jane (Limbaugh) Delph had two biological children, Edward (born 1870) and Emory (1875). Their foster children, Dudley Evans and Elizabeth Coward, married in 1874 and started a family of their own on a separate farm. Dudley died in 1894, just about the time the Limbaughs arrived, leaving Lizzie a widow with four children: Henry (born 1880), Daisy (1882), Anna May (1888), and Louella (1892).

By 1894 the John W. Limbaugh family totaled a dozen, counting the household head and his wife Mary Catherine (Cook). The eldest child, twenty-one-year old Charles Columbus (born 1873), was betrothed to a local girl when his folks moved away. He stayed in Bollinger County just long enough to marry and then moved to Pemiscot County to take a job in a sawmill. The other seven boys and two girls were under age and still lived at home—a good reason for the family patriarch to buy more land.

Louella Evans, though just a toddler at the time, had vivid memories of some of her Limbaugh neighbors. Living side-by-side and related by marriage, the two families naturally worked and played together, traded news and views, and formed lifelong bonds of friendship. Each morning their school-age children walked to school together. Years later Lou laughed at the memory of thirteen-year-old Pony Limbaugh (1881) coming up the dirt road "driving a wagon with a team of mules" that "had a funny broken brake on the side." His tall and handsome older brother, Imandra V. ("Andra") Limbaugh (1875) farmed with his father for a couple of years on the new place but, like most young men under parental supervision, wanted a life of his own. Across the fields he found new friends in the Evans family. Andra liked Henry's strong work ethic and mechanical skills, but he liked Henry's younger sister



Figure 26 Andra and Daisy Limbaugh
Imandra V. Limbaugh, better known as Andra, was the second of John W. and Mary Catherine Limbaugh's eleven children. As a young man in Missouri he lived on a farm close to the Evans family, whose daughter Daisy was considered one of the prettiest young ladies in the area. They married just before Christmas in 1897. Nearly five years later, along with their daughter Ouida, they rode the immigrant train to central Oregon. With them were Daisy's widowed mother and the rest of the Evans family.

Daisy even more. By all accounts she was a natural beauty, and for one of her neighbors no shy wallflower, according to Lou. "My older sister Daisy cast a longing eye over that way and the first thing we knew Andra Limbaugh was coming over our way." One day, fooling around, he "slid down the cellar door and tore his pants," Lou remembered with a chuckle. But Daisy was only twelve when Andra first came to Byrd Township, so they had time to develop a serious relationship. Late in 1897, tired of waiting, Daisy and Andra married. She was not quite sixteen, but the death of Lou's father three years before may have eased the social pressure. Even then the average age of marriage for women was 21.9 years.⁵

Andra and Pony had four other brothers who were teenagers when they settled in Byrd Township. Sixteen-year old Marvin (1878) had some growing to do before he reached maturity, but he met a neighbor girl in school, Mollie Dickerson, almost the same age and background. After a four-year courtship they married in 1898.

Marvin's younger brother Julius (1879) seemed less interested in conventional social interaction. As the middle child in a big family, he never grew out of feeling neglected and abused as a boy. His brother El-

zia (1890), reflecting back on his boyhood years, said, “All the brothers and sisters got along [except] ... Julius.” That memory was confirmed many years later by Minnie Limbaugh, the wife of Bennett (1883). She said Julius “always brooded about the past”:

He’d bring up something that happened to the boys. He had a horse one time. He run it in a race, and Bennett bet on it and won a lot of money and didn’t give it to him, and he was still harping about that [years later]. He just lived in the past.

“It always seemed to me Julius acted like he was hiding from something,” Minnie told me. Elzia thought he knew what it was when I talked with him about his mysterious brother. “He liked to gamble, and I think he got in debt, and when he found out [gamblers] ... was after him he’d have to move.”⁶

Julius may have had personality issues, but under his father’s tutelage he developed a practical skill in carpentry that earned him a good living when he left the farm. Indeed, John W. Limbaugh’s boys all were good carpenters, but only Julius made it a profession. Like his father, he built houses everywhere he went, for himself and for others. Bidding on jobs and moving on after they were completed seemed to suit his itinerant lifestyle.

Bennett was only eleven when the family arrived in Byrd Township. By the time they left six years later he was the tallest and leanest of his siblings. Next in age were his two sisters Virgie (1885) and Elora (“Loy”) (1887). Early photographs confirm later impressions, that Loy had weak eyes and brown hair, and was shorter and stouter than her older sister. Virgie’s dark eyes and haunting stare gave her a vampish look that would have seemed glamorous in certain popular circles, at least after World War I. How it played in rural Missouri at the time is uncertain. Both girls stayed close to home until they were adults, and neither made much impression on the eight boys who seemed to dominate the Limbaugh household.

The last two boys in this large family, Elzia (1890) and Hadley (1893), both claimed Sedgwickville as their birthplace in later years, though

they were actually born in the family home built by their father on the farm near Little Muddy Creek. Elzia had a one-sentence memory of the Byrd Township farm: they raised “pigs, cows, hay, etc.” His terse description was typical of the Limbaugh brothers, who thought deeds more important than words. The lack of loquacity was also a product of frequent moves and fragmentary education, for none of them spent much time in school. The youngest child, John Hadley, was just a baby when the family moved in 1894 to Byrd Township, and seven when they moved to Colorado. The only report card saved from his early years was issued in 1912 by a school on the Emmett bench in Idaho. At age nineteen, he had just completed the seventh grade.

The Colorado Transition

The two sons of John P. Limbaugh were not the first family members to leave Missouri. A previous chapter noted that during Gold Rush era California had attracted three sons of Daniel R. Limbaugh—James Bennett, Henry H., and Nathaniel Pinkston. Almost a half-century later Moses and his older brother John led their families to Grand Junction, Colorado.

Moving to Colorado required coordination not only between Moses and his brother John, but also between their wives, the two sisters Frances and Mary Catherine (Cook) Limbaugh. For two years after Moses sold out in Bollinger County, his family lived with his wife’s elderly parents, George and Lauraney Cook. Their 250-acre farm near Marquand in Madison County was too big to handle without help, and their only surviving son, George Cook III, was married and had two young children on a farm of his own nearby. The situation called for expediency, as both the Cooks and the Limbaughs realized. In a temporary arrangement, Moses and his eldest son Adolphus (born 1879) helped the senior Cook with farm work, while Frances and her younger sister, Pernice (Cook) Robbins, a school teacher in Marquand, assisted their mother Lauraney. When George Cook Junior died in April 1899, his widow moved in with Pernice. That freed Moses to look elsewhere for opportunity, but he had to wait until Frances, pregnant with her tenth child, was able to travel. A few months after Nathaniel Pinkston—the



Figure 27 Pernicia (Cook) Robbins and Lauraney (Limbaugh) Cook

Daniel Limbaugh and his first wife had three children, including Lauraney, pictured here with her youngest daughter, Pernice, a married school teacher in Marquand, Missouri. After Lauraney's husband, George Washington Cook Jr. died in 1899, Pernice cared for her mother in Marquand while her two older sisters, Mary Catherine and Frances, moved to Colorado with their husbands, the two brothers John W. and Moses Limbaugh. Lauraney died in 1901 at the age of seventy-seven.

third Limbaugh with that name—was born in June 1899, Moses took his family on the train to Grand Junction.⁷

Beginning in the 1880s, Grand Valley developed rapidly as a farming community after the Ute Indians were removed and public lands opened for settlement. Irrigation improved crop production and made commercial agriculture possible. By 1890 Grand Junction had become a center for services and supplies transported in and out by railroad lines from two directions. Farmers planted sugar beets and alfalfa in the lowlands along the Colorado River, and apples and peaches in the uplands. Good rail service enabled commission houses and growers' associations to expand markets throughout Colorado and beyond. Land prices reached \$1,000 an acre for mature orchards in some areas. But early frosts, pests, and depression later in the decade combined to cloud the future of Mesa County agriculture. The economy picked up after McKinley's election in 1896, but some farmers had still not recovered when Moses arrived in 1901.⁸

Why Moses stopped in the Centennial State instead of riding the train on to California where other relatives then lived has never been explained. His arrival in Grand Junction, however, provides a clue to

his interests and gave the local news editor a chance to promote Mesa county agriculture:

Moses Limbaugh, a new comer in the valley, ordered *The News* last week. He comes from southwestern [southeastern] Missouri and has leased the old Bonneterre orchard, now owned by R. C. Evans, and his family consists of his wife and ten children. Sugar beets ought to do well in their locality.⁹

This was a run-down 20-acre property in Grand Valley near the heart of the city. Its owner was a delinquent taxpayer, probably desperate to make a deal. As a former tax collector, Moses knew what to look for. Doubtless he had heard about farming opportunities in western Colorado, perhaps from newspaper promotions and ads in Missouri newspapers.

Moses' departure left John W. and his family behind in Missouri, but not for long. Family memories are vague on details but agree that the older brother followed in 1901 when the younger brother beckoned. After selling their Byrd Township property and settling their accounts, the Limbaughs boarded the immigrant train at Jackson. Marvin and his wife, Mollie, rode along with the rest of the family, but the two older married sons, Charles and Andra, stayed behind. Charlie's career had taken a different turn, and newly married Andra had obligations to his wife's relatives, the Evanses and Cowards. They were also considering a move west after hearing about new homestead opportunities available in central Oregon. Daisy was pregnant by the time Andra had made up his mind that Missouri land was too expensive for young farmers. A baby girl they named Ouida arrived early in 1902.¹⁰

When John W. and the rest of his family stepped off the train at Grand Junction, Moses had a piece of land waiting next door to his own property just a few miles from the city in a farming community called Fruita. Long afterward, Elzia, reminiscing about the deal, didn't remember the seller but thought that his father had "bought 14 acres of apples for \$800." But the local press reported the selling price at \$1,200, or \$85 per acre. That was no bargain. Land sales in Mesa County for



Figure 28 John W. Limbaugh's House

The clean lines and simple functionality of this two-story clapboard farmhouse in Fruita, Colorado, are indicative of John W. Limbaugh's progressive outlook. Builders in the Progressive era rejected the overwrought elaboration of older Victorian homes in favor of efficient, practical, modern structures. With the help of his older sons, J. W. built this house 1901 after his family moved from Missouri. He stands in the shadows on the porch with his wife, Catherine. The rest of the family from left to right: Elzia, Hadley, Elora, Virgie, the two daughters-in-law, Mollie and Pauline; and their husbands, Pony and Marvin.

1901 averaged \$25 per acre for 10- to 160-acre parcels. Farther west, unimproved public land was still available under the Homestead Act for little more than the cost of filing. That John W. paid above-average prices for Mesa County land does not imply either that he was gullible or that his brother was unscrupulous. Many different local conditions can affect land prices. But the transaction does indicate that both brothers had considerable resources when they left Missouri, and both thought Mesa County land was a good investment.¹¹

For the next three years the two Limbaugh families lived side by side, sharing work and pleasure, good times and bad. In 1901 Moses had six school-age children; John W. had four. "All of us kids went to school together," Elzia remembered. The older children stayed close until they could build up resources to strike out on their own.

John W.'s twenty-three-year-old son Marvin and his bride, Mollie, rented a separate farm in Grand Valley just outside Grand Junction, and lived there until 1921. By then the postwar farm recession forced them farther west. They crossed to Salt Lake and took the train south to Los Angeles. At Santa Ana, Marvin found steady work in a walnut packinghouse. His younger brother Pony lived at home when they first came to Fruita. In 1902, the Schadt family arrived in the neighborhood from Missouri by way of Nebraska. They had a pert eighteen-year-old daughter, Pauline, who "soon got acquainted" with Pony. He married her two years later and moved to town to find work as a day laborer. They stayed behind when his father's family moved to Oregon, but followed a year later after the birth of their son Orrie.¹²

For Moses and his family, the Colorado venture started well but ended badly. As a landowner he rose in local civic circles, serving on the county grand jury in 1902. Later that year he speculated on a large lot in downtown Grand Junction that paid off two years later when he traded it for 52 acres near Fruita. But tragedy struck in 1904, when their twenty-year-old daughter, Lula May, or Lily as she was known, died unexpectedly. It struck again in 1908, taking their teen-age son Harrison, the twin of McKinley—their names reflecting their father's proud Republican identity. Harrison's death was "untimely," his hometown Missouri paper reported. What it didn't say was that he died accidentally after "a bunch of kids shot with guns," Pauline recalled. That was not the end of family grief in Colorado. A year later their oldest son, Adolphus, still unmarried and living at home, died of complications following a long struggle with typhoid fever. "The Lord is my friend" were his son's last recorded words, but Moses must have felt like Job in the depths of despair. Soon after burying Adolph next to his brother in the Fruita cemetery, Moses and Frances sold everything and returned to Missouri with six of their seven surviving children. The only one who stayed in Colorado was their oldest daughter, Bertha, nicknamed Birdie, who lived in Denver with her son and second husband.¹³

The Mortimores and Free Methodism in the Pacific Northwest

While the Limbaughs and Evans were still neighbors in Cape Girardeau County, twenty-two year-old Martha Tucker, Louisa and John Tucker's eldest daughter, had migrated to Oregon in 1897 with Free Methodist missionaries from Kansas. A year later, as we have seen, she married Edward Mortimore, a widower with two young children who had spent three years among family and friends so that their father could earn their keep in the harness shop of "Brother Willey" in Oregon City. Merton and Olive rejoiced at the chance to end their family diaspora and meet their new "Mama." Their foster care had been less than adequate, even for the 1890s. Merton remembered tending to his Grandfather David's needs after the crippled old man was moved to Oregon City to spend his last years with his daughter Ella and her husband, Philip Bowerman. They had hired a caregiver, but ten-year-old Merton "went along to help" dress, clean, and feed him. By that time David was so helpless that Merton even had to scratch his ear for him. Earlier, Merton and his sister had lived with their Aunt Mary in Portland for several months. She had married Elias Miller a year after the death of his first wife, Mary's sister Roxena. Mary and Elias—or Silas, as he was called by the family—had several children of their own and a cow in the backyard. All the kids sat in a circle on the floor for the evening meal, dipping bread into a pan of milk.¹⁴

Martha welcomed the children as her own, but she knew there was work ahead when she saw eight-year-old Olive for the first time. Her family was waiting at the platform when the train brought her back from Springfield, where she had virtually been in service for two years as housemaid, cook, and bottle washer for a kindly but elderly Free Methodist family. She stepped off the car dressed in rags, with her hair tied in a knot on the top of her head and covered by an old straw hat coned like a dunce cap. When he took a good look at his sister after a long absence, Merton exclaimed: "Aw-w-w, that don't look like Ollie!"¹⁵

An experienced house mother at age twenty-two, Martha immediately took charge and the kids loved her for it. She took them back to their small apartment above Brother Willey's shop, washed and curled Olive's hair, then went to town for "some pretty material" to make a



Figure 29 Free Methodist Meeting

Even though they had severed ties with orthodox Methodists over doctrinal differences, Free Methodists replicated the Wesleyan hierarchical organization. F.M. congregations worshipped together at spirited camp meetings every year, and elders met in annual conferences to review personnel matters and make ministerial assignments. At this Spokane conference in 1900, Edward Mortimore (highlighted in the second row from the top) asked for reassignment, but was sent back to Athena, Oregon for another year.

new dress. From the very first day her stepchildren called her “Mama,” and she responded with love and kindness. “I suppose that sounded strange to her,” Olive told me, “but we welcomed her and were very happy to have a home again.”¹⁶

Aside from taming and training wild horses, Edward made harness and leather shoes in Oregon City, but after marrying Martha he found a new calling. With her encouragement he decided to leave the harness business and pursue a full-time career as a Free Methodist pastor. He lacked formal education or training, and filling in for absent preachers had been his only experience before 1898, but he was charismatic enough to win support from local evangelicals. He “always had a gift of talk,” his daughter Evelyn told me, “and talked right off the cuff anytime. He was always interesting. Nobody I don’t think ever went to sleep when my father was talking.” Olive had a similar memory. “He was just a good preacher; even in his later years ... he’d preach once in a while, and people would say ‘Oh my; that’s the best sermon we’ve had in a long time.’”¹⁷

A month after marrying Martha, Edward attended the Oregon Annual Conference and applied for a pastorate. The church elders appointed him to Athena, a small Umatilla County community twenty miles northeast of Pendleton near the Washington state border. This assignment turned out to be more of a challenge than he had expected when he arrived in March 1899. The membership was too scattered to support a single church, so he rode circuit between the Van Sickle and Waterman congregations, holding alternate Sunday services in school houses. In the middle was the little village of Athena, where a tiny parsonage was provided for the pastor and his family.¹⁸

One Sunday that spring a widow named Gallagher came up to Edward after church and asked if he would help her deal with an unruly crew on her big ranch nine miles outside Athena. Her young son had been unable to handle the property by himself, and she needed a foreman as much as the Mortimores needed a supplemental income and a bigger place to stay. With Martha pregnant at the time, a deal was struck and they moved in just in time for the birth of Paul, who was delivered by midwife in an upper room of the big ranch house. Widow Gallagher had ample means but lacked the virtue of generosity, as Martha found out very soon after arriving. Oblivious to the comfort of her boarders, the stingy landlady turned the kerosene lamps down as low as possible, thus saving fuel but increasing the smoke at the same time. Nothing could persuade her to change despite Martha's growing impatience with such penny-wise pound-foolishness. For baby Paul's sake, if not for her own, Martha resorted to subterfuge. Whenever the widow was not in the room Martha simply turned the lamp wicks up.¹⁹

If the kerosene smoke treatment didn't demonstrate Paul's resilience to life on the Oregon frontier, a buggy accident a few weeks later did. Pride was a sin to the Free Methodist Mortimores, but Edward approached pride in the fine team of horses he had trained himself. One of the fastest in the region, they took only forty-five minutes to complete the nine-mile run from the Gallagher place to town. One Sunday evening as the family returned from church in the four-passenger hack, the horses kicked loose from the harness on a downhill run and the wagon went out of control. Olive, riding with her father in front,

jumped in panic over a horse as the wagon careened past. She landed in the dirt unharmed. In the back seat Martha tossed baby Paul out on the high side and then jumped herself. Edward rode out the wagon. All miraculously escaped without injury.²⁰

They were still boarding at the Gallagher place when the Mortimores became acquainted with W. Joseph Stockman, a prominent eastern Oregon wheat farmer who needed a handyman. The dryland wheat business was booming in Umatilla County at the time, producing about a third of Oregon's entire crop. The Stockmans started with a homestead that grew to several thousand acres of golden grain. Though the Stockmans were Methodists, they liked Edward and his family and invited them to help with the fall harvest. Like most men with diversified small-farm backgrounds, Edward "could do most anything," his daughter Olive told me later. He had a range of practical skills that complemented his indomitable spirit. Soon he was taking care of the Stockman horses as well as the combines and other farming equipment. Martha meanwhile helped Mrs. Stockman in the big kitchen that served the harvest crews. Even Olive had a job taking care of baby Paul, while the Stockman's oldest daughter took care of the Stockman's baby Lowell, later a popular eastern Oregon congressman.²¹

The experience at Athena began a pattern that Edward continued until the mid-1930s: preaching on Sunday and working odd jobs during the week to keep the wolf from the door. But after a year riding back and forth between two small congregations Edward wanted to move. When the Free Methodist elders gathered for the 1900 conference, he drove a two-seated open hack with a fast team to Spokane. With him were Martha and Olive, along with C. W. Stamp, the district elder, leaving Merton at home to take care of Paul. Sitting in the back seat next to Brother Stamp wasn't much fun for Olive. "He was an awful tease," she remembered. "He tormented me to death" all the way and back. They didn't take him the next time.

At the Spokane conference Edward asked for a transfer, but instead was sent back to Athena for another year. "Every year the Conference passed on the character of the preachers," Olive recalled, "whether they were true to their tasks, and whether they should stay or be trans-

ferred. But if they stayed two years then they felt it was time for them to move.” In 1901 the elders transferred Edward to Chewelah, Washington, fifty miles north of Spokane near the Colville Indian Reservation. It was a new experience, but not one they enjoyed.²²

Martha did not like the place from the start. The beauty of the country, with its rolling hills and verdant valleys, did little to offset the dark memories of a troubled past. She felt too close to the relatives of warriors who had massacred missionary Marcus Whitman and his wife a half-century earlier. In this part of the Pacific Northwest most Indians were Catholic, due to the remarkable success of “Spokane Gary,” a Salish Indian converted by French Canadian fur traders. Educated and trained by priests in Canada, he returned as missionary to his own people. Catholic missions were generally more effective than Protestant among the Spokane and other Salish tribes in the Pacific Northwest. Occasionally their religious paths would cross. Olive remembered one incident that contributed to Martha’s discomfort. An Indian woman in traditional dress boldly opened the parsonage door and walked in. Martha stood frozen while the stranger poked around, grunting occasionally and gesturing for food. With her frightened children gathered around her, Martha stood her ground and finally ordered the woman out. “You go to priest to get things,” she said.²³

In the meantime Edward had troubles of his own with the Chewelah congregation. The church elders had forced out his predecessor, whose farewell sermon was tellingly based on the scriptural text, “And one of you is the devil.” Now they were fighting among themselves again, with the Mortimores were right in the middle.²⁴

Martha made the first new move as soon as school ended in the early summer of 1901. With the two youngest children, Olive and Paul, she took the train to visit her Tucker relatives in Kansas, leaving Edward and their eldest son Merton to settle affairs at Chewelah. She learned by telegram in September that her husband had resigned and that he and Merton were on their way east to join the rest of the family. To avoid overcrowding her folks she rented a small house nearby, and there the Mortimores spent the winter of 1901–1902 contemplating their future. Edward had had enough of fulltime preaching for

awhile.²⁵ Martha simply would not stay in the Midwest; the summer storms frightened her to tears. She still carried childhood memories of horrible tornados and savage blizzards and big thundering bolts of lightning crashing down around her: anything to escape the brutal weather of the southern plains, even if it meant going back to Athena. There was no chance of resuming employment with Mrs. Gallagher. The stingy old widow had been killed as she tried to cross the Union Pacific tracks with a wagon load of vegetables in front of a racing train. Their friends the Stockmans would surely welcome them back to the wheat fields, but neither Edward nor Martha wanted to remain field-hands for very long.²⁶

As they talked that winter, local newspapers told of new homestead lands opening in central Oregon, south of the Columbia River rapids some 100 miles near two tiny stage-stops called Palmaine and Culver. Pioneer dryland farmers had entered that country at least twenty years before. Near Juniper Butte in 1881 a large family named Peck, with four sons and three daughters, took a preemption claim and opened a blacksmith shop. Nine years later George and Ella Osborn found a spring not far from the original Peck property. They established a boarding house and stage-stop on a site near what was first called Perryville, then Culver. But by 1900 newcomers were spreading into the flatlands along the eastern bank of Crooked River, northwest of the Osborn place. William H. Peck, head of the Peck clan, was among the first to move to the new area, which after 1900 came to be known as New Culver to distinguish it from the older site to the southeast.²⁷

Nine miles farther north, along Willow Creek, some enterprising merchants set up a store and founded the town of Basin, soon renamed Palmain. By 1904 it was officially given a more exotic title, Madras, after the city in India—although the pronunciation was Americanized by accenting the first syllable. Indians were indeed close by. Since the 1850s a band of Wascos from The Dalles, and most of the Deschutes bands of Walla Walla, lived on the Warm Springs Reservation established for them east of the Deschutes River. Occasionally a few walked into town to see the local sights. Some Anglo pioneers thought Madras was within the reservation's boundaries, but the line never crossed the river.²⁸

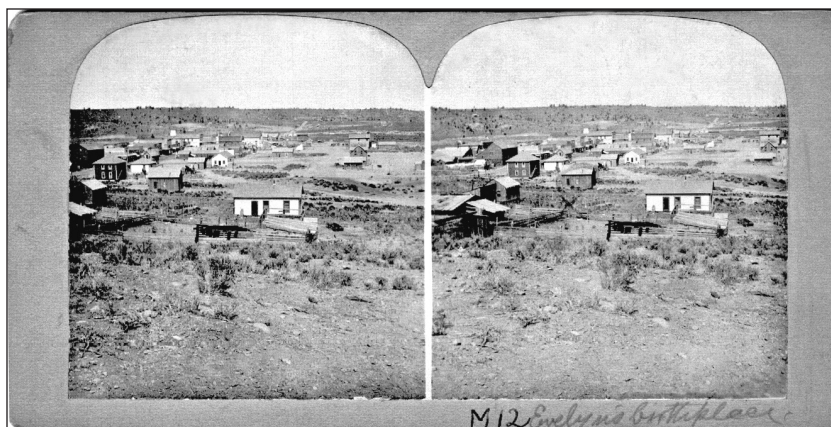


Figure 30 Madras, Oregon

A central Oregon town founded by eastern immigrants in the 1870s adjacent to an Indian reservation. Its second name, Palmaine, was changed just before—or after—June 1903, when Evelyn Mortimore was born in the small white cottage built by her father in the center of this stereograph. She always jokingly referred to herself as “the first white child born in Madras.”

As they read about the dryland hay and wheat grown in the rich volcanic soil of Central Oregon, Edward and Martha pondered the future. The chance for a restart on homestead land seemed worth taking, especially since Martha’s family, the Tuckers, was willing to join them. Under homestead rules, stretched somewhat to accommodate American land hunger, each head of household could claim 160 acres of surveyed and designated public domain land. If farmers faithfully settled on the land and worked it for five years, they could secure full title for only the price of the filing fee. Even if they wanted clear title without waiting five years, the going price was \$1.25 per acre, which they could recover easily and then some by selling to a secondary owner after holding the land long enough for surrounding settlement to inflate property values. One can visualize the excited discussion around the kitchen table of the Tucker farmhouse. Even John Tucker’s two unmarried daughters, twenty-three-year-old Pearl and her sister Frances, just turned twenty-one, could each qualify for a claim as the “head of household.” Only the married women, Martha and her mother Louisa, were ineligible. But just think of it! Four

claims—640 acres—a solid square mile of land—all in the hands of one family! Little wonder the vision of rags-to-riches, made famous in that innocent age by the best-selling dime novels of Horatio Alger, seemed much more real than fanciful to whole generations of Americans and Europeans before World War I.²⁹

As soon as the weather cleared in March 1902, and after the Tucker house was sold, the chattels packed and the goodbyes said, the Mortimore and Tucker families boarded the train for Oregon. They stopped at Athena, the agreed-upon staging ground, for the months of preparation they would need before they would be ready to live on the juniper and scrub barrens in central Oregon. Edward found a suitable house for rent with a small acreage for a garden and some grain. While Martha and the Tucker women planted vegetables, Edward and his father-in-law built furniture and made utensils, saving the little money they had for livestock and a few essentials they were not able to make themselves.³⁰

Sometime that spring John Tucker and his two daughters made an advance trip to the homestead country, leaving the others at Athena to continue preparations. For several days they toured the entire region from Willow Creek south to Haystack Butte, and from Crooked River east to Buck Butte. William H. Peck and his boys welcomed them and helped them locate unclaimed land on what was known as Opal Prairie just south of their own acreage. Doubtless the presence of two eligible young ladies provided incentive for the Peck boys to be accommodating. On their way back to Athena the Tuckers recorded their claims at the U.S. Land Office in The Dalles. Each claimant paid a \$16 filing fee and obtained a receipt identifying the quarter-section and noting the requirements for title. Sixteen dollars for 160 acres! To obtain full title, claimants only had to live on their land and cultivate it for five years. That sounded easy on paper.

Convergence in Central Oregon

Like a family game of leapfrog on a continental scale, the next move belonged to the Limbaughs. Two Limbaugh families were still in Colorado when the Limbaugh–Evans contingent left Jackson, Missouri, in

4-138.

Receiver's Duplicate Receipt No. 11799 Application No. 11799

HOMESTEAD.

Receiver's Office, THE DALLES, - - OREGON,

November 19, 1902

Received of Edward M. Mortimore the sum
of Sixteen dollars _____ cents;
being the amount of fee and compensation of register and receiver for the
entry of SW⁴ of Section 4 in
Township 11 South of Range 13 E. N. M. under
Section 2290, Revised Statutes of the United States, contain-
ing 160 acres. Chas. Nathan
Receiver.

\$16⁰⁰

NOTE.—It is required of the homestead settler that he shall reside upon and cultivate the land embraced in his homestead entry for a period of five years from the time of filing the affidavit, being also the date of entry. An abandonment of the land for more than six months works a forfeiture of the claim. Further, within two years from the expiration of the said five years he must file proof of his actual settlement and cultivation, failing to do which, his entry will be canceled. If the settler does not wish to remain five years on his tract he can, at any time after fourteen months, pay for it with cash or land-warrants, upon making proof of settlement and cultivation from date of filing affidavit to the time of payment.

0-4

Act June 5, 1900. Athena

Timber land embraced in a homestead, or other entry not consummated, may be released in order to cultivate the land and improve the premises, but for no other purpose, except by making the land a being entered of the timber for deposit purposes is a question of fact which is liable to be raised as a point of law if the timber is sold and removed for any other purpose than to cultivate the land to be settled, and the person who cut it will be liable to pay for the recovery of the value of said timber, and also to criminal prosecution under Section 3861 of the Revised Statutes.

See note in red ink, which Registers and Receivers will read and EXPLAIN THOROUGHLY to persons making application for lands where the affidavit is made before either of them.

Figure 31 Homestead Receipt

Prospective homesteaders first staked a claim on newly opened government land, then recorded the entry at the nearest federal land office. This was Edward Mortimore's receipt for a claim near Palmaine (soon renamed Madras). Note the ten-cent-per-acre filing fee. On marginal farmland like this, with no equity at stake it was easy to walk away if plans went awry. After struggling three years, Edward abandoned the land and took his family to Portland to look for work. For thousands like him across the West, the homestead "ideal" often left a bitter memory.

August 1902, heading west toward their kinfolk. As the senior male, Andra, now twenty-seven, had quite a responsibility with eight people in his charge, including his wife, Daisy, and their newborn daughter, Ouida. Joining them were his mother-in-law, Lizzie, widowed by Dudley's death several years earlier, and the three unmarried Evans children, along with a Missouri friend of the family, Ernest Crump, who was on his way to California.³¹

Instead of stopping in Colorado like his parents, Andra had been persuaded by relatives to head directly to Oregon. Already there were his wife's aunt, Louisa Tucker, and her family in Athena, and his mother's brother, Will Coward, who had moved from Kansas to The Dalles on the Columbia River several years earlier. The homestead ideal drew scattered farm families together like iron filings to a magnet.

The trip from Jackson took five days and endless patience. Immigrant trains were grand assemblages of people and possessions, jammed together like sticks in a storm drain. Aisles were lumpy land mines filled with paper parcels, stuffed satchels, trash, and kids. Open windows offered some relief from the desert heat and the smell of unwashed clothes, unwashed bodies, and other assorted aromas—none too pleasant—but the price of outside air was smoke and cinders from the locomotive and dust from the windy plains and deserts. Andra's family contributed their share of the confusion; young Louella carried the coffee pot in her lap all the way, while Daisy rinsed Ouida's diapers in the public sink and hung them out the window to dry.³²

At Grand Junction there was a brief reunion at the station while the train refueled. The travelers rushed out to greet Dad Limbaugh and the rest of family, who had been waiting for what seemed like hours on the platform. For twenty minutes or so, amid the scrambling confusion of train crews, porters, dray wagons, passengers, and panhandlers, the two families hugged and kissed and exchanged gifts and relived old times until the whistle blew and the conductor herded everyone back aboard. Then three more days of weary travel and another reunion with the Cowards waiting at The Dalles.³³

They stayed with the Cowards two months, gathering provisions, selecting livestock and wagons, and planning the next leg of the jour-

ney. While the women canned and sewed, Andra and his brother-in-law Henry Evans, age twenty-two, headed south to the homestead country. Andra located a claim in New Culver between John Tucker's place and the Peck property. Henry wanted land for himself as well as his mother. He persuaded John Peck to take up a claim on her behalf right next to Andra. All three returned to The Dalles to file papers. Lizzie paid John about \$30 for his help.³⁴

For a few months in late summer Andra and Henry earned a few extra dollars working as fieldhands on the harvest near Athena, where Pearl was also working as cook. When the harvest ended in late September the two young men rejoined their families at The Dalles, packed covered wagons, and headed south.

After a week on the trail the family wagon train reached the grassy plateau two and a half miles due east of Juniper Butte in what was then north-central Crook County. At Culver, the Osborn family stage-stop, they pitched a tent in an orchard near the Osborn's spring and set up temporary housekeeping. As the nights got chillier the Osborns took pity on the newcomers and let them sleep in the haymow of their barn. The tents remained for cooking and storage, however, until a barn of their own could be built on Andra's claim on the east bank of Crooked River.³⁵

The Mortimores and Tuckers started for central Oregon at about the same time, but from Athena the route as well as the method differed. Olive and Merton had already started school by then, but they didn't object when moving day came at last. Edward had planned the trip carefully. He chartered a railroad boxcar and loaded it with everything they had accumulated in six-months' preparation: dismantled farm implements, wagon wheels, barrels of kraut, canned vegetables, piles of lumber and nails, homemade furniture, carpenter's tools, household goods, two cows, a team of good horses, a pony for the kids, and nine human passengers. Fortunately, the boxcar segment of the journey lasted only a few hours.³⁶

It was late evening when they reached the end of the line at Shaniko, with still some thirty miles to go by wagon road. As a railroad town it had a rough but deserved reputation. Full of saloons and hard-

drinking cowboys, it wasn't the most desirable place for a preacher and his family to spend the night. Yet there was little choice until Edward could unload the boxcar the next day. They rented a room in a cheap boarding house and slept uneasily, with occasional gunshots puncturing the night air. In the morning Martha awoke with a headache and an itch and a rash, the latter compliments of the local bedbugs.³⁷

Edward and his father-in-law spent the morning assembling the wagon and transferring the boxcar contents, with women and children working feverishly alongside. They were on the road by noon and made about ten miles the first day. A friendly farmer let them camp out in his hayfield that night. Up before dawn the next day and on the road by daylight, they reached Palmaine before dark. That night they slept on the dining room floor of a farmhouse whose owner welcomed the weary travelers as if they were old acquaintances. It was a friendly country.³⁸

The friendship may have had religious origins. The Mortimores were apparently not the first Free Methodists in Palmaine, nor were they the last. Between 1900 and 1910 central Oregon experienced a religious reawakening led by two evangelical Protestant churches, the Mennonites and the Free Methodists. Each developed distinctive geographic boundaries as local revival meetings brought neighbors into the fold. In Palmaine the Free Methodists were predominant, while the Mennonite influence concentrated further south in the vicinity of Culver. By 1904–1905 the Andra Limbaughs and their Evans relatives had joined that congregation. On the other hand, the presence of a Free Methodist organization in the Palmaine area by 1902 may have been the key attraction to the Mortimores.³⁹

Finding a claim was one of the first orders of business for Edward Mortimore. Even though the Tucker claims were located a few miles south on Opal Prairie near Culver, he found likely wheat land along Willow Creek where one might also grow potatoes by diverting creek water like other farmers nearby. He quickly built two cabin floors on vacant land with the boards from his cache on the wagon, and before nightfall two new tent tops dotted the dusky horizon. A few days later he made a quick trip to The Dalles to record the claim.⁴⁰

A few miles south the Limbaugh–Evans party worked day after day on the barn emerging on Andra’s homestead four miles from their temporary quarters at the Osborns. By the first of November it was almost ready, but still unfinished was the concrete-lined cistern alongside. A cistern was essential for livestock and household use until a well could be dug. Farmers in New Culver and Palmaine all used cisterns in lieu of expensive wells the first few years, even though to fill them they had to haul water four or five miles in tanks or barrels from the few available springs on other claims. The Osborn and Hoffman springs were the closest and purest, but sometimes farm families used less potable water. Once poured and stored in cisterns, of course, the quality of spring water deteriorated rapidly. Louella remembered occasionally finding a dead mouse floating in the cistern that she and her brother Henry eventually built.⁴¹

Louella’s older sister, fourteen-year-old Anna May Evans, must have quenched her thirst with contaminated water that October 1902; by early November she was exhausted from diarrhea and delirious with fever. Little could be done except watch and pray and consult *The Cottage Physician*, probably the most widely read book on the farm frontier—next to the Bible, of course. But homeopathic remedies like *mercurius* and *arsenicum*, even if available, were often worse than the disease. She died on 11 November in a tent, never seeing the new barn that the men finished that same week.⁴²

Living in a barn had a certain appeal if you liked company and animals. It was roomy enough that winter not only for all the livestock, but for four families as well. The cows and horses and chickens shared the stalls and the outer walls, while the Limbaughs and Evans divided up the interior and the haymow. They also invited the Mortimores and the Tuckers to share their quarters, since they were still living in tent-houses. Ten more people crowded into the loft, bringing the total barn occupants to fifteen, not counting the horses, cows, chickens, and dogs. For heat and light, sagebrush, kerosene, and tallow candles were the only sources of power for most families until electricity arrived in the 1930s with the Rural Electrification Administration. The men thus cleared their land that first winter and gathered fuel at the same time.⁴³



Figure 32 Shaniko Stage

Before construction of the Oregon Trunk Railroad in 1911, passengers between Shaniko and Madras rode on open or covered stagecoaches like these at Culver. Heavy freight wagons, pulled by a six- or eight-horse teams on a jerkline, took the same hilly overland route. Bells on the lead teams warned oncoming traffic on narrow canyon grades.

Despite all the preparations in Athena and The Dalles, food ran short before the winter ended. Getting provisions to Central Oregon was not an easy task in winter of 1902–1903. Most established families were well prepared with root cellars full of canned goods and potatoes grown along the irrigated lowlands bordering Willow Creek. Most greenhorns used up what they brought in with them, then purchased foodstuffs from the Osborns or a few other merchants in the region. Produce not grown locally was imported from Shaniko, usually by a jerkline of six or eight horses pulling two covered freight wagons. On looping narrow canyon grades, oncoming traffic was warned by the peal of arched bells on the lead teams.⁴⁴

The folks in Andra's barn purchased as little as possible. Almost every cent had gone into trip supplies and land recording fees. Few merchants offered credit to newcomers. Bartering, hunting, or doing without were the usual options. To help get through the winter Andra and Henry grubbed sagebrush for William H. Peck. They were paid in bacon and were mighty glad to get it, as Louella recalled. Pearl, too, found work cooking and washing and sewing for the Peck family, and

John in turn helped her clear her own claim. Before the year ended they had announced their engagement. Edward Mortimore also traded work for food, but John Tucker was too old and too tired to be of much help. Later his elderly mother back in Kansas, when she learned food was scarce, suggested they collect jackrabbits and “drive them to Kansas” if Oregon farmers didn’t want them. They would sell well in the Midwest and “make good eating fried or in Pot Pie.”⁴⁵

Pioneer life in the Culver country was hard but not without its lighter moments. Central Oregon is spectacular lapidary country. In good weather and bad, outings to Opal Springs, on Crooked River five miles southwest of New Culver, entertained newcomers. To stand near a cold artesian spring at near-freezing air temperature and watch sparkling, hail-sized opals bubble to the surface was fascinating, especially to youngsters. Older and worldly wise kids of all ages came to share the treasure, conveniently collected with a tin can nailed to a long stick. In the early days nearly anyone could walk away with a handful of handsome specimens.⁴⁶

In the spring of 1903 the Tuckers visited the springs, and fifty-five-year-old Louisa dipped up a small box of shiny opals that she saved as a present for the baby her daughter Martha was expecting. That same box with its pebbly treasures sits on my office shelf today, a family heirloom passed down through four generations.⁴⁷

The cozy barn dwellers on the Andra Limbaugh claim returned to their homesteads that spring to begin sowing crops and building their own barns and houses. On the Mortimore homestead in Palmaine, Edward erected three new tent-houses. With three children and a pregnant wife, he needed as much room as possible. But as her due date drew closer, Martha complained. She didn’t want her baby born in a tent. To please her he brought out his carpenter’s tools and constructed a small one-room frame cottage, big enough for a bed and stove but not much else. On 2 June, with the help of Mrs. Parris, a Free Methodist midwife, Martha gave birth to a healthy russet-haired girl they named Evelyn Eloise.⁴⁸

Two minor myths developed out of this singular event. In later life Evelyn always insisted that she was born on an Indian reservation and

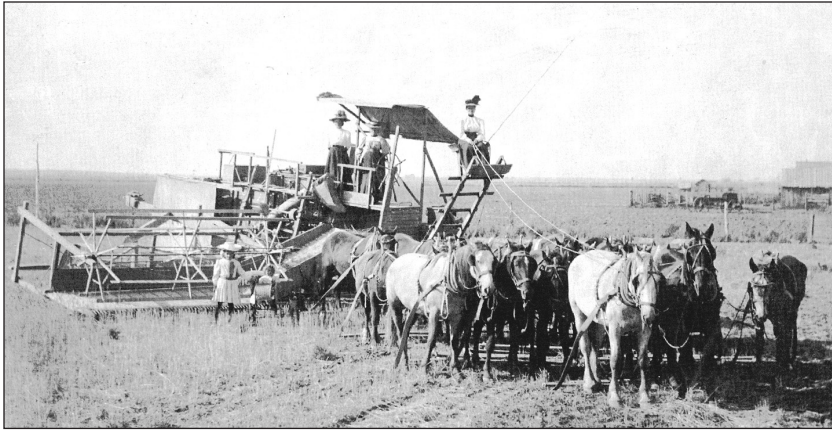


Figure 33 Culver Combine

Horse-drawn combined harvesters were common sights in western wheat country before World War I. This 1910 photo purports to show a working “crew” on Andra Limbaugh’s homestead made up of women from the Limbaugh and Evans families, but more likely the actual crew is taking a lunch break while the photographer stages the risky shot. Note the presence of two children, eight-year-old Ouida Limbaugh and her infant brother Lawrence in a baby carriage, who are posed just inches away from the ten-foot cutting bar, with fourteen horses harnessed to the tongue. Although steam-powered tractors had been available since the 1880s, workhorses were not truly “emancipated,” as one wag said, until caterpillar tractors came on the market in large numbers after 1910.

was the first white baby in Madras. Actually, as noted above, the reservation was several miles to the west, and Palmaine didn’t officially become Madras until 1904. It also stretches credibility to insist that no white babies were born in the area before 1903, considering the fact that pioneer families had arrived there as early as the 1870s. However, she still might be technically correct if the name Palmaine was unofficially discarded as early as June 1903. With luck and a little tongue-in-cheek, then—the way she would probably want it—she might well deserve acclaim as “the first white child born in Madras.”⁴⁹

For the next few years these pioneer families struggled hard to live up to the homestead ideal in Central Oregon. To provide an income while they cleared their claims and erected farmhouses and barns, many families worked for more established farmers. The Limbaughs and Evanses found work in the summer wheat harvest, with Henry Evans earning the highest pay as stationary thresher mechanic. Andra

forked cut wheat onto the conveyer belt, while Daisy and Lou worked as cooks.⁵⁰ For weeks at a time they were on the road with the wheat crews, which traveled hundreds of miles through dozens of counties in Oregon and Washington in the course of a single season. Money saved from wages went into building materials and implements and seed and dozens of other expenditures on their own claims in Culver. Luckily, their strength and health and youthfulness sustained their long fight to survive.

From Colorado to Oregon

Late in 1904 a new group of Limbaughs arrived in Culver to join their relatives. A few weeks before, J. W. Limbaugh suddenly sold his 14-acre apple orchard, which he had purchased three years earlier from his brother Moses for \$1,200. Two greenhorns, looking for a new line of work after closing a cigar store in the East, walked wide-eyed among the trees during a particularly good harvest. They asked J. W. if they could buy two-bits' worth. He took a sack, filled it with culls, and handed it over. Astounded, they said in New York City each apple would be worth 10 cents. Later the same day they returned and paid him \$4,500 in cash for the property. According to J. W.'s son Elzia, the next year the New Yorkers went broke and turned the property over to a Limbaugh cousin.⁵¹

In the meantime, J. W. and Mary Catherine, along with their unmarried children, headed west by train. They arrived in Culver sometime in the fall of 1904 and spent the winter with Andra. According to family tradition, that winter Joshua P. Hahn hired J. W. and Julius to build the first building in Madras, a mercantile store and hotel, which later burned to the ground in 1913. John A. Hoffman in *Jefferson County Reminiscences*, however, claims that the store was built in 1903. At any rate, John W. was a noteworthy carpenter as well as farmer. Some of his buildings still stand in both Oregon and Idaho.⁵²

Like their Limbaugh kinfolk, the Mortimores and Tuckers also struggled to survive the homestead experience. John Tucker's two daughters did well enough; they each found hardworking husbands among the Peck boys. In 1903 Edward Mortimore performed the mar-

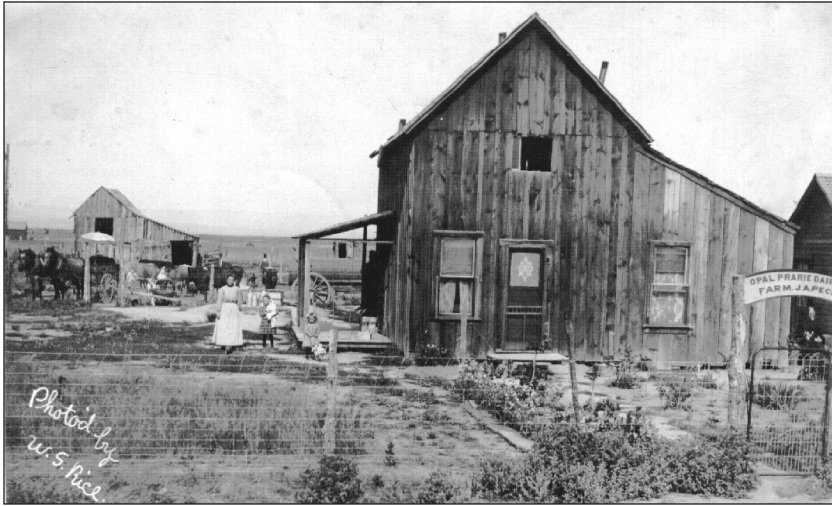


Figure 34 The Peck Homestead

John Peck and his wife Pearl (Tucker) Peck lived twenty years on this homestead at Opal Prairie near Culver. Built in 1902 by John and his brothers, the original two-room cabin had a sleeping loft reached by ladder. Later it was expanded with a room in back to accommodate Pearl's mother. During their marriage in 1903, with Pearl's brother-in-law Edward Mortimore conducting the ceremony in a nearby church, the Limbaugh boys stole a march on the reception by raiding the cabin through an open window. They thought it was great fun to "chivaree" the newlyweds by eating their wedding cake.

riage ceremony for John Peck and Pearl Tucker, the union thus combining two adjoining homesteads. On 9 November of the following year, John's elder brother Lee married Pearl's younger sister Frances.⁵³

The latter nuptials came just after the Grand Junction Limbaughs arrived in Culver, and provided the setting for a practical joke that turned sour. As the wedding date approached some of the local boys decided Lee and Frances should be chivareed. The wedding and dinner was scheduled for John and Pearl Peck's home, with a reception held at the Tucker place nearby. On the wedding day the hosts carefully prepared the food, set the wedding table, decorated the house, and proudly watched while Edward performed a second Peck–Tucker marriage. Then the wedding party left for the reception, with John locking the house behind him to ward off mischiefmakers. He didn't lock the windows, however. In a little while a few neighborhood kids, includ-

ing some of the sons of John W. Limbaugh, crawled in and gorged themselves with goodies. Carried away with their own cleverness, they threw caution to the winds and forgot all about the wedding party, who returned while the boys were still inside. In a panic they barely escaped the clutches of a furious John Peck, who ran inside for his shotgun swearing a blue streak. One boy, Bert Woodward, was so scared he ran through a fence that practically tore off his pants. For some years afterward the Pecks and the Limbaughs hardly spoke to each other.⁵⁴

Religious and lifestyle differences for a time also made life difficult for both married couples, as well as for their elders. Raised by indulgent parents who practiced Christian Science, the Peck boys were known to enjoy an occasional drink and a round of cards. They also smoked. On Saturday nights the older brothers, Dave and Ralph Peck, took turns calling square dances.⁵⁵ To many frontier families these activities were harmless enough, but the growing pietist influence after 1900 tended to alter attitudes in central Oregon. The Free Methodists and Mennonites regarded as sinful all forms of personal indulgence, and they worked hard to exorcise these evils from the community, both through legislation outlawing saloons and gambling, and by frequent revival campaigns to save the souls of the sinners. The Peck family thus found itself caught by the changing mores of a community in transition.

Despite the destabilizing impact of their marriage, Pearl Peck never wavered from her family's faith. John apparently had other ideas at first. They fought the land and each other, with Pearl and her parents determined to overcome the influences that had led John "astray" in his youth. The prayers and the revivals and the camp meetings eventually broke John's resistance; he was "saved" and welcomed into the Free Methodist fold. His parents, however, continued to worry the pious Mortimores and Tuckers. In one revealing letter John Tucker wrote to his brother in Kansas, he complained bitterly about the two elder Pecks, who in his words were "wild, ranting Socialists and Christian Scientists."⁵⁶

Frances Peck, apparently less devout than her older sister, dropped away from Free Methodism in the first few years of marriage. It took the loss of a child, a "blue baby" with a faulty heart valve, in 1908 to

restore her religious zeal. John Tucker's description of the incident is a revealing insight into the mind and mores of frontier fundamentalism:

A good practical phone line had just been installed, putting the whole settlement in direct & momentary communication with each other without expense, for they own it. ... Just 24 hours before the trancet of the little spirit the girls were brought under such conviction because of his intence suffering that they held quite a lengthy conference in the bedroom then called their husbands in and after considerable more time Pearlie came in where a dozen or more of us with tear-blinded eyes were standing over the little suffer[er], stated briefly, but very positively their convictions, and asked if she mite call a certain sister a mile or so away to come & pray for them, saying "we believe the Lord is letting the dear Baby suffer so to bring us to Him." Then with a look of determination that aught to defeat the Devil at once, she went to the phone, rang up the Family (who said Sister Maud had retired for the night). She had them get her up & in about 30 minutes the Boys had hooked up a team, drove the 2 mi. & had her in the room. So for the next one or two hours we had a Prayer meeting that will not soon be forgotten, resulting in genuine Victory for Francie. And Pearlie says she is determined to obey and serve the Lord, if He never blesses her [again with child]. And we are sure that if she does so, she also will soon be saved. Not only so, But there is more real conviction on Hearts all over the country for miles & miles than has been manifest for many a day. Backsliders and people of all classes & ages standing up for the prayers of the Pilgrims and asking for a Revival service. ... Quite a Reformation at least ... is taking place with the Peck boys, and several others. They never before gave a cent for the support of preacher & had said they never would, but yesterday John said If I would write out a subscription or voting list (to get the same man back for another year) he would both sign & circulate it. I did so, and in about 2 hours he had secured over \$40.00 and I am told has been out with it all day today. So praise the Lord.⁵⁷

The senior Tuckers never quite adjusted to life in central Oregon. It was far, far away from the land of their youth, with wide open spaces and few close neighbors. Relatives took over management of their homestead, and John and Louisa spent most of their remaining years in the quiet confines of their Culver house. Even with their daughters relatively close, John and Louisa felt isolated and lonely. During a flu epidemic in 1908 John described the extent of his isolation in a letter to his brother:

I will attempt to pencil you a few lines, but doubt whether I shall succeed or not for I am not squarely on my pegs yet from another siege of Lagrippe (which is going as an Epidemic all over this country as well as the East.) and I had to crawl out weather or not yesterday morn early as Louli [Louisa] came down with it quite suddenly. And we are a mile & a half off the phone line, and could call no one so I managed to drag myself over to Sister Lizzies [Evans] (from whence they are all connected up) so I could ring up everybody nearly.⁵⁸

John Tucker died of heart failure on Christmas Day in 1910 and was buried in the nearby I. O. O. F. Cemetery. In a handwritten obituary, his eldest daughter Martha described the religious fervor that accompanied her father's final hours:

Early Christmas morning the watchers saw the end was drawing near, and asked if prayer should be offered. ... Then he was asked, "Shall we sing?" he replied, "Yes sing." Friends sang "My latest sun is sinking fast," and his lips moved, lisping the words, although he could not speak audibly. He raised his hand, and heavenly smiles lit up his countenance. Then he whispered, "Sing 'Through the valley of the shadow I must go' ... and 'There's a light in the valley'" ... and while we sang, he seemed greatly blest, and actually laughed for joy. A daughter asked, "Papa are you going to heaven now?" He answered, "Yes *sure sure*." It was a glorious victory over death. Many passages of scripture were repeated, hymns were

sung, and prayer offered, while for several hours he lay in a stupor. Finally opening his eyes, he gave this world a farewell look. Then closed them in peaceful sleep to awake in paradise.⁵⁹

His wife Louisa by 1910 was evidently beginning to show signs of mental decline; after her husband died she failed rapidly and soon had to be closely watched by her family. For some years she lived in special quarters built behind Frances and Lee Peck's home in Culver, but after she began to wander off she was eventually confined to an institution. I remember my mother describing her condition as disorientation and rather mischievous but innocuous bliss. It is suggestive of the early symptoms of Alzheimer's disease, which may also have affected her eldest daughter Martha at the end of her years, as well as Martha's daughter Evelyn. She was later diagnosed with Alzheimer's and died in 1996, seventy-six years after her grandmother Louisa died at the Peck home in Culver.

During the first few years of their homestead struggle, while the Limbaughs and the Tuckers worked out their own adjustments to the rigors of pioneer life, the Mortimores labored both in the field and the pulpit. By 1906 the cleared land on their homestead was producing over 200 bushels of dryland wheat.⁶⁰ With luck and good weather they might have done quite well, at least until the farm economy soured after World War I.

But Edward soon tired of farm life. He never entirely left the preaching profession, yet neither did he take it up full time. Life to him was a constant series of temporary chores, a time of transition when the needs of the body had to be served until the final passage beyond. Since he could not support his family on a Free Methodist preacher's income, nor on that of a part-time farmer, he did whatever came along in the way of odd jobs. Two years before he could qualify for title, he left the homestead and took his family to Portland.

So the Tuckers married or died, and the Mortimores moved. What happened to the Limbaughs? After spending a year in Culver, Andra's parents—J. W. and Mary—and his unmarried brothers and sisters still living at home, decided to move on. They left behind twenty-year-old

Virgie, who married a Culver man named Carthan in 1905. In the fall of that year the rest of the Grand Junction Limbaughs rode a wagon to Shaniko and took the train to Portland, where the Lewis and Clark Centennial celebration was just concluding. After a day at the fair they traveled south through Oregon City to Salem. Ten or fifteen miles out of the capital, on the Red Hills near the tiny hamlet of Turner, they purchased a modest acreage and built a home and barn. For extra money J. W. and his sons also built several other buildings in the area.⁶¹

That winter Mary Limbaugh became ill. Doctors diagnosed it as breast cancer and scheduled her for surgery on 16 April 1906, in a Salem hospital. Following the operation she opened her eyes and whispered, "I gave my soul to the Lord," and then died.⁶²

The family broke up soon afterward. Pony and Pauline, who evidently had joined their relatives in Culver and then had traveled to the Red Hills with the rest of the family, left to find work on a farm near Boise. In the fall of 1908 they took up a homestead on the Emmett bench—the first Limbaughs in Idaho.⁶³

Tall, lanky Bennett, two years younger than Pony, struck out on his own in 1908 and found a job as cowhand for a huge cattle ranch on the North Powder River in eastern Oregon. There he met a chuckwagon cook, Minnie Watkins, and married her in 1909. His older brother Julius left for parts unknown and occasionally reappeared to visit relatives but never for very long. An unknown incident had darkened his past, and he seemed always on the move after that.⁶⁴

By the end of 1908 only the widowed father, J. W. , now age fifty-six, and his three youngest children—Elora, Elzia, and Hadley—remained on the Red Hills farm. Loy soon found work in Salem and left the fold; Elsie and Hat went to school in Turner and during the summer picked hops. By 1910 Elsie had also moved out after finding a job at the paper mill in Oregon City.⁶⁵

With only his youngest son still with him, J. W. early in 1910 sold the Red Hills farm and returned to Culver for a visit with Andra and his family. Hat was now nearly seventeen. The frequent family moves had kept him from attending much school, but he was tall and strong and eager to go to work. That spring the Culver country was full of

excitement. A railroad company had announced plans to extend the line from Shaniko to Bend, picking up Madras and Culver on the way. Speculators were flocking in to take up land along the right-of-way. As Pearl noted after she and her husband returned from a visit in May to her sister in Portland, “The train was full of land buyers and when they found out we was from Madras John was kept busy [answering questions].”⁶⁶ As soon as school ended that spring Hat took a railroad construction job. The crews worked long hours grading the roadbed, hauling gravel, laying ties, pounding rail. They slept on the ground and sometimes foraged for food and drink in the local pastures and streams. It was rugged but fun for a boy, and Hat never complained until one day he woke up with chills and fever. In a few hours he was deathly ill, burning with temperature and nearly delirious. His gang boss packed him in a wagon and hauled him to Culver, where his father put him to bed at Andra’s house. There he languished for weeks without adequate medical attention. The local doctor was stumped, but as the fever began to subside the disease revealed itself in Hat’s lower extremities: infantile paralysis—polio—the first case in the Culver country. The Limbaughs always claimed he contracted it by sleeping on the ground, but drinking contaminated water is more likely.⁶⁷

The long road to recovery was tough on Hat as well as on his relatives. Day after day he struggled up in a sitting position, massaging his legs until his hands were sore. The right leg eventually recovered most of its function, but the left was shriveled and numb. In October 1910, while he was still unable to walk, he and his father moved to Emmett to live with Pony and Pauline on their homestead. Pauline remembered young Hadley’s determination to conquer the disease by making his legs work. For hours on end he would raise himself between two chairs with his arms, and force his left leg back and forth over a broom handle on the floor. Pauline gave him daily massages and kept encouraging him. Without a doctor’s care or professional therapy or braces, within a year he was walking without crutches or canes.⁶⁸

In the meantime the Culver relatives carried on through the best and worst years of the homestead experience. The railroad arrived in Madras in 1911 and in Culver a few weeks later. No longer isolated



Figure 35 Train to Madras

In 1910 the Oregon Trunk Railroad, a subsidiary of E. H. Harriman's Union Pacific, began construction of a spur line from Shaniko to tap into the central Oregon markets of Madras, Culver, and Bend. Along the way it crossed the 500-foot-deep Crooked River Gorge with this spectacular bridge. It reached Madras in 1911 and Culver a few weeks later. While working with the roadbed crew near Culver John Hadley Limbaugh came down with polio.

from markets east and west, central Oregon entered a period of prosperity that accelerated when war erupted in Europe. Rising farm prices stimulated greater crop production and capital investment. Water districts were formed to tap the waters of nearby rivers and bring water by pipeline to the dry plateau south of Madras, ending the long reliance on dirty cisterns. Real estate developers swarmed in to clean up on rising land prices. Local boosters distributed thousands of postcards picturing giant potatoes and succulent vegetables, all grown on newly irrigated rowcrop land near Culver. Nothing, it seemed, could prevent the march of progress.

Then the war ended and the bottom fell out of the market for farm goods. European farmers went back into production, leaving thousands of American homesteaders overextended and buried in surplus. In the Culver country and elsewhere where marginal farmland had been brought into production, farmers had little hope. Many of the more prosperous sold out and moved away; a few hung on through the twenties, until the Depression hit and the Roosevelt administration forced them off the land.

The Limbaughs, Evanses, and Pecks all left before the worst times came to Culver. In 1919 Andra Limbaugh purchased an apple orchard in Fruitland, Idaho. That fall Ouida and her brother Lawrence (born 1908) moved to Payette so Lawrence could start school, while Andra and Daisy stayed behind to close the land sale. The next year they joined the rest of their family in Idaho. With them went Henry and Louella Evans, who had taken over their mother Lizzie's homestead after she died in 1912.⁶⁹

The two Peck families soon followed. Lee and Frances Peck, with their two surviving children, Lester (born 1913) and Lila (1914), moved to The Dalles in the early 1920s. After their twelve-year-old daughter Rilda died in 1921—the second child they had lost in Culver—they wanted no more of that hardscrabble country. John and Pearl Peck sold out for \$40 per acre and moved to Fruitland with their three children, Bernice (born 1904), Inez (1909), and Louisa (1916). They had also suffered the pain of a departed daughter, three-year-old Elvira, a measles and pneumonia victim in 1917.⁷⁰

These and other pioneer families came to central Oregon hoping to realize the American Dream. In many cases their homestead efforts failed miserably, but the experience taught lessons in fortitude and family sharing that kept the dream alive for later generations.



Family Life on the Margins of Prosperity

Family history has grown in both popularity and respect in the post-modern era. Once an esoteric topic, the domain of court historians and genealogists, tracing ancestors and putting “flesh on their bones” became a popular pastime following publication of Alex Haley’s *Roots* in 1976. Challenges to conventional history during the civil rights revolution a decade earlier also elevated family studies in academia. Proponents of the “New Social History” added family perspectives to course curricula, encouraged student research into family themes, and even launched a professional journal devoted to the subject. Though the scholarly momentum has slowed a bit, the search for family roots at the grassroots still flourishes today all across America and abroad.¹

What can family history tell us about the role of ordinary families in shaping the lives of American individuals and institutions? The following case study of an Oregon farm family in the first quarter of the twentieth century offers some insight into that important question, but one must remember that family models have changed over time. Before the 1950s, small farmers and their families lived on the margins of urban-industrial society and reflected many of the variables of a preindustrial culture. These rural families tended to be large, influential, and wide-ranging, with parents, children, and sometimes grandparents and other relatives living under the same roof. Extended family

networks provided emotional support and served various economic and social functions, including employment, protection, education, religion, and recreation.² But family size and function changed along with the economic, social, and demographic transformations that have characterized twentieth-century life in the United States. The new urban era produced a new domestic paradigm, the nuclear family, a more pragmatic, less inclusive structure with more limited functions. In its most idealized version, as the popularity of the *Ozzie and Harriet* series on television suggests, the nuclear family was a monocratic, static model of Waspish values, a powerful icon of American popular culture. Since the Cultural Revolution that began in the 1960s, however, much of this idealistic imagery has fallen away to reveal a much more diverse and dynamic family structure that is still evolving today.³

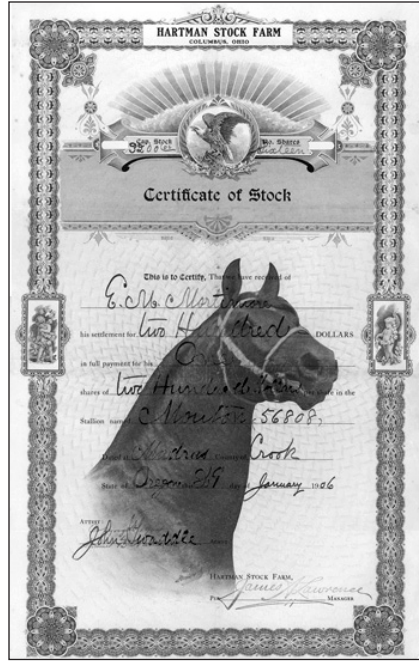
From Farm to City

The Mortimore family story exemplifies many of the characteristics and problems of extended families trying to cope with the changing realities of life in modern America. The Mortimores reached the Pacific Northwest at the beginning of the twentieth century. Their Scots or Scots-Irish ancestors, almost all impoverished small farmers, had landed on the east coast more than a century earlier. After generations of acculturation they did not have to endure the burdens of racial prejudice or language differences that stood in the way of thousands of minority families also seeking a better chance in the Far West.

Yet the road to upward mobility contained two formidable obstacles, poverty and ignorance. The lack of capital and the lack of education severely handicapped young families seeking the American Dream, although not everyone recognized their shortcomings. Farmers, in particular, could see the obvious need for money, but few advocated education as an answer to the Farm Problem, as the late 19th-century decline of agricultural prosperity came to be called. For many small farmers at the turn of the century, better times ahead meant better crops, better markets, higher prices, cheaper transportation, and better equipment. Few thought of changing occupations as the new century dawned.

Figure 36 Edward Mortimer's Stock Certificate

In hindsight, Edward Mortimore's dubious \$200 investment in a stud horse seems hard to reconcile with the penurious income of an itinerant minister and part-time homesteader. Two hundred dollars in 1906 would amount to nearly \$5,000 today. The bet proved worthless, but he never lost faith in human nature.



One exception was Edward Merrit Fenton Mortimore, who abandoned his Madras, Oregon, homestead in the spring of 1906, failing by two years to meet the residency requirements for title. Though times were relatively good for farmers in the prewar years leading up to the Sarajevo crisis in 1914, Edward had lost interest in his dryland tract after a three-year struggle. It was not large enough to specialize in wheat, too cold and arid for garden crops, and too far from a railhead to bring down the cost of transportation. He was glad to leave it behind, and his wife Martha was even happier. She hated the primitive life, and refused to bear children in a tent. Three years earlier, at her insistence, Edward had rented space in Madras and built a one-room cottage where she could be near a doctor during her second, and last, pregnancy.

Doubtless her fears and frustrations as a frontier farmer's wife weighed heavily in the decision to return to the Willamette Valley, where they had started married life eight years before. Portland beckoned to her like a biblical oasis, a glistening City on a Hill.⁴ Just before they left, Edward, in an uncharacteristic gamble, invested \$200—the

cash probably from the sale of some farm chattels—for part-interest in an old thoroughbred horse in Ohio named Mouton that had been turned out for stud. Two years later, perhaps using money from his last homestead wheat receipts, he bought 3,300 shares of stock—doubtless at a huge discount off the \$1 par value—in the “Gallaher Mining and Milling Company” of Roslyn, Washington. In hindsight, both ventures proved unsound. Apparently, there wasn’t much demand for Mouton’s services. The stock also crashed, but in the meantime the Mortimores had moved to Portland. On the corner of 60th and Glisan Streets Edward opened a shoemaker’s shop not far from the house they rented. It was a much safer bet on future earnings.⁵

Portland was an alluring city to middle-class Euro-American families in 1906. A new generation of progressive businessmen had taken charge of planning and development after the turn of the century. Urban reform was a persistent theme in the Progressive Era, and Portland’s leaders mirrored national thinking in promoting beautification, temperance, zoning, election reform, mass transit, and other improvements to make the city look better and function more efficiently. City fathers were also profit-minded, encouraging urban expansion and industrial growth to prevent economic stagnation and offset the threat from upstart Seattle. The result was a decade of reform, prosperity, and dynamic growth, beginning with the Lewis and Clark International Exposition of 1904–1905 that brought a million and a half visitors to Portland. Increasing demand and new capital expenditures spurred growth in export trade, transportation, manufacturing, and retail sales. A booming job market attracted thousands of new families, in turn fostering a residential housing boom. Developers expanded eastward across the Willamette, opening new “streetcar suburbs” a mile or two from the downtown business district and away from older, seedier neighborhoods. By the time the Mortimores arrived, Portland’s east-side residents, the majority of them homeowners, outnumbered those who lived west of the river, where rental units predominated.⁶

For the first few weeks in Portland the Mortimores stayed at the home of Eva and Jessie McFeron, Edward’s sister and brother-in-law, at the end of the streetcar line in Montavilla. Then they purchased a



Figure 37 Portland Road Crew

Before the development of gas-powered caterpillar tractors and mechanical earth movers, city road crews like this one in Portland before World War I relied primarily on horse-drawn scrapers and sleds. Edward Mortimore used both horses and tractors while working as a grader in Portland and later as a “finisher” in Umatilla County.

modest new home of their own at East 58th and Glisan in the Mount Tabor district. A boxy bungalow typical of the times, it came with a barn for Edward’s team of horses and enough pasture for a cow or two and some chickens. Drawing on his experience years earlier as a harnessmaker in Oregon City, he rented a storefront a couple of blocks away and tried shoemaking for a time, but building shoes and building harness were not exactly comparable. Working with horses was more to his liking. When a job grading roads for the City of Portland opened, he grabbed it eagerly. He was a skilled horseman, deftly maneuvering cumbersome horse-drawn graders and scrapers through the Portland hills. When Merton, the eldest son, also got a city job, Martha saw Providence at work. To her father she penned an ecstatic note: “Ed & Merton together will make \$6.25 per day & no expense comes out of it so that is good. Truly God is blessing and prospering us at the present.”⁷

For additional material support as well as sanctuary from the stresses of urban life, the Mortimores turned to the Free Methodist network in Oregon. As a lay leader Martha had been among the pioneers from Kansas who established the first Free Methodist congregation in the lower Willamette Valley. Her husband, a convert to the church after the death of his first wife in 1894, was an ordained Free Methodist minister with two children, Merton, nineteen years old in 1906, and his sister Olive, two years younger. Marrying Martha in 1898 brought stability to a family that grew to four with the addition of Paul a year later and Evelyn in 1903. Before taking up the homestead near Madras, Edward had served several small congregations in eastern Oregon and Washington. Now he welcomed the change from farm work to regular employment in the city and found time on weekends to serve as a substitute minister. Soon he was preaching regularly at the Free Methodist hall in Sunnyside, a few miles south of downtown Portland on the road to Oregon City.

For her part, Martha took up the domestic chores as a housewife, mother, and farmhand. Any milk and eggs the family didn't need she peddled from door to door. She also continued her Free Methodist missionary work, tending to the sick, preparing the dead for wakes and burials, visiting the shut-ins, and offering advice and comfort to those in distress. She toted Paul and Evelyn, her two youngest children, along on trips around town, walking as much as possible to save money but riding the streetcar on longer excursions. The children started grade school nearby, but probably learned more at home than at school. Their God-fearing parents, following Calvinist evangelical tradition, insisted that children should read and recite the Bible as early as possible. Each morning after breakfast they took turns reading a passage of scripture and saying a prayer to start the day. Paul, the youngest son, became so well versed that he often came home from Sunday school complaining how little his fellow students knew of the Bible and its meaning.

Martha's two stepchildren, older and experienced beyond their years, were also good students, but they had little chance to attend school regularly until the family reached Portland. The eldest, Merton,

Figure 38 Olive Mortimore

Olive Mortimore was just nineteen when she posed for this photo in 1909. Without a high school diploma, she passed the test for a state teaching certificate and took her first job at Redland School near Oregon City. For \$38 a month, she taught forty-eight primary students of all ages in a one-room schoolhouse. It was the beginning of a long teaching career.



age twenty-one in 1908, spent his senior year in high school at the Free Methodist seminary in Seattle. After a summer in Portland he returned the next fall to enter what later became Seattle-Pacific College. His younger sister Olive completed the equivalent of junior high work at Glencoe, an experimental school for “selected studious kids,” as one family member described it, but still had no high school diploma at age eighteen. Her teacher, Miss Butler, persuaded her to apply for a teaching job at Redland, five miles from Oregon City. To get the job she needed not a diploma but a teaching certificate from the state superintendent’s office. Assured by her teacher that she could qualify, Olive invested 25 cents in a streetcar ride to Oregon City, took an exam in reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, and methodology, waited until the superintendent himself graded it, and happily came home with both certificate and job offer in her pocket.⁸

Redland School served a rural community eight miles from Oregon City. Similar to dozens of others in the days of unconsolidated school districts, the one-room structure provided a full range of elementary education in a six-month school year, starting in fall and ending by

Easter. For \$38 a month, Olive taught forty-eight students in all eight grades and of all ages, some nearly as old as she. The pay was low even for that era, but her board cost only \$12 a month—church friends looked after their own. She stayed two years at Redland School—the pay improved to \$48.50 the second year. At Christmas she felt rich enough to come home with a goose in tow for the dinner pot.⁹

In 1909 all the family members came home—Merton from Seattle and Olive from Redland—to be with their mother and the younger children during an unexpected crisis. A smallpox epidemic swept through Oregon, taking down Edward along with dozens of others. He went to the “pesthouse,” the isolation wing of the county hospital. While he recuperated, county officials quarantined the Mortimores and fumigated their home. The health department also vaccinated everyone, leaving all but Olive sick with false pox for a few days. All were well by summer, but the scare provided another lesson in the tenuous nature of earthly existence. Martha began to write little marginal notes in her Bible about this time, underscoring passages she took to heart or sermons she had heard. One passage in Hebrews, asserting God’s promise of salvation as the “hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast,” expressed the core of her feelings during the troubles of 1909.¹⁰

Martha’s somber moods generated seeds of depression that would periodically afflict her throughout life. Fortunately, her manic moments did not affect other family members. Edward’s happy disposition derived from an abiding faith that God Would Provide, whatever the circumstances. Their children inherited neither the mystic moodiness of Martha nor the rosy optimism of their father. They were realists who focused on the mundane tasks of earning a living and raising a family.

Changing circumstances had a lot to do with this pragmatic outlook. America’s “age of innocence” ended by 1914. The social, economic, and political upheavals of the next three decades permanently altered American’s perceptions of themselves and their future. Rural life and values, once the dominant components of American culture, fought a losing battle with the forces of urban-industrial growth after World War I. Martha and many older Americans who witnessed these

changes equated them with epic Biblical struggles between Good and Evil. Edward seemed more reconciled to change, as if it was all a part of God's Divine Plan. But he was an active participant in the moral crusades of the day, preaching against the "wages of sin" and giving freely to support church-sponsored campaigns against white slavery, the liquor trade, gambling, and other vices.

Once the family smallpox crisis of 1909 was over and Edward was on the mend, the older children turned eastward to look for work. Giving up further education at Seattle-Pacific, Merton passed the state teacher's exam and took a school at Culver, very near his relatives the Pecks, Limbaughs, and Evanses, who were still struggling to make ends meet as homesteaders in central Oregon.¹¹ After a year or two he returned to Portland and found better-paying job clerking with the U.S. postal service.

Teaching School in Central Oregon

Women had more limited choices. While Merton was still at Culver, Olive found a teaching vacancy nearby at Red Rock school, six miles from Culver. The pay was \$50 per month, with only six students to teach, but she was unhappy there. In 1910, her reputation for handling "country kids" landed her a six-weeks' job in Prineville replacing an inexperienced young Seattle teacher who was unable to handle a classroom of rowdies. Combining discipline and tact, Olive quickly restored order, put the rowdies in front of the class, and by the end of term had made friends of most of the troublemakers.¹²

In the fall of 1910, an offer of a job at \$60 per month at Rock Creek School near Gresham in Clackamas County attracted her. She stayed a year, but came back to Red Rock in March 1912 during an "awful mixup" between the local school board and a defiant teacher. The nature of the dispute was never made clear, but the board members terminated the teacher's contract before the term ended, and hired Olive to finish the last three months. Her hiring may have been influenced by the presence of John Peck, her aunt's spouse, on the school board, but probably more influential was her experience and stellar track record.



Figure 39 Pipelaying near Culver

During the early years of settlement in central Oregon, Jefferson County farmers, merchants, townsfolk, and firefighters all competed for the limited surface water available. The water table was so deep that most homesteaders and other residents relied on cisterns for domestic water storage, even though keeping them full required hauling water by tank wagons or barrels from artesian springs four or five miles away. Just before World War I the first pipeline arrived from Opal Springs, a vast improvement over cisterns, but the diversion dried up the artesian flow. This photo shows the pipeline under construction through Andra Limbaugh's homestead, while one of his horses looks on

Despite the presence of family and friends, Olive was troubled by the community's lingering social and religious tensions. When the school term ended she was anxious to leave, as a card to her mother makes clear: "I don't know why you think I enjoy staying here. I am here, but not by choice."¹³ Olive returned to Portland when school was out, tired of school board squabbles. She took a year off from teaching, living at home and working part-time at Meier and Frank's, the city's biggest department store. Nearly twenty-four and unattached, she began to think about finding a mate. At church she met lots of young men. One she brought home embarrassed her and led to endless teasing by her little sister Evelyn when he humbly asked for a "dirty towel" so he could wash up.¹⁴ With another young man, Vernon Damon, romance blossomed like a spring flower. But trouble arose when

Vernon's brother Irving began acting strangely. The details were never discussed, but evidently he disrupted Free Methodist meetings and had to be restrained. Olive hints at the problem in a letter to her mother: "Poor Irving. I wonder what makes him so bad. It's a good thing they got him away when they did...." Diagnosed as psychotic, he was led off to the Oregon State Hospital. Olive once paid him a visit and found him "very intense and strange." She never went back, and eventually parted company with Vernon. Years later she said her folks feared the malady might be catching.¹⁵

Still unsettled after a year in the city, Olive returned to teaching in the fall of 1913. She took a position at Mud Springs, three miles from Madras, in the hardscrabble country of her kinfolk. It was familiar turf, with wonderful views of the Cascades but barely tamed from frontier days. The country was overflowing with rabbits, fair game for farmers and the poor. Rabbit drives were a popular sport, as young Paul learned in a letter from his cousin Bernice, eldest daughter of John Peck. "Come out and help hunt rabbits," she invited. "They sent 555 to Portland to the Salvation Army for the poor people...."¹⁶

Native Americans from the Warm Springs Reservation occasionally could be spotted on the dusty streets of Madras, though their numbers were dwindling. Settlers and their families, in turn, visited Warm Springs on hot summer days to enjoy the mineral water. Sometimes it seemed hard to tell the difference between people, as Pearl exclaimed in a note to her sister Martha while on vacation at the springs: "We look like Indians that hadn't had anything to eat for a mo. John learned to swim since coming here."¹⁷

The railroad had arrived in Madras in 1911, but other services were still in short supply when Olive took up her duties at Mud Springs. Farmers, merchants, townsfolk, and firefighters all competed for the limited water available. During the winter of 1913—fourteen neighbors came together to lay pipe from Opal Springs to the Madras and Culver townships, cutting off the artesian flow and the fountain of shiny opals that had attracted the first settlers just a few years earlier.¹⁸

For two terms Olive taught a small group of students in the one-room schoolhouse at Mud Springs. The following year she took a posi-

tion in the town of Madras at her biggest school to date. A two-story brick building, constructed in 1908, served students from first grade through high school.¹⁹ She taught there a year, and might have remained longer had her family stayed in Portland. But in the fall of 1914 her father decided to move to Washington, and Olive's plans abruptly changed.

Methow Interlude

Though he had lived in Portland since 1906, Edward never adjusted well to urban life. By experience and inclination he was essentially a farmer and ranchhand who preached on the side. The transition to shoemaker and road grader helped put food on the table, but good city jobs were hard to find without at least a high school diploma. A two-year economic recession in the Pacific Northwest after 1913 may also have played a role in his decision, for urban work dried up when prices collapsed for lumber and farm products.²⁰

Though the record is unclear, Edward's move to Washington seems more motivated by lifestyle choices than economics. Portland's rapid growth made it hard to be an urban farmer on the outskirts of the city. Though citywide zoning ordinances were still a few years away, progressive neighborhoods were already imposing limits on animal husbandry and other "dirty" industries. New technology on the eve of World War I swept away the vestiges of horse culture that still lingered on the city streets. Tractor-driven road graders replaced draft animals; automobiles crowded the horse-and-buggy off the main roads. Urban living was too fast-paced for a vulnerable Free Methodist farm family like the Mortimores. Merton, the eldest son, had already fallen away from the family circle. He took a city job with the post office and was courting a city girl. Olive remained in close touch though living apart, and the younger children were still in school. Paul had just started the sophomore year at high school, and Evelyn was entering the fifth grade. The timing was not ideal, but the opportunity beckoned to return to ranching and Edward jumped at the chance.

Edward's older sister "Ella"—the family Bible records her as Elma Craig—sparked his sudden enthusiasm for Washington in 1914. After

the death of her first husband, Perry Surface, she had married Philip Bowerman, who owned a 160-acre ranch and orchard in the hills near Methow on a tributary of the Columbia River forty miles above Wenatchee. The Bowermans were anxious to leave—or at least Ella was—as Edward found out when he visited them early that year. A trade was quickly arranged—too quickly for Martha, who spoke her mind when her husband returned with the news that he had agreed to exchange their Portland home for the Bowerman place. Her memories of Washington during the Chewelah pastorate a dozen years before were none too pleasant, and Methow was less than twenty miles from the western boundary of the Colville Reservation, whose inhabitants had both scared and repulsed her earlier. Besides, Paul was in high school, and Methow had only an elementary program. What transpired during those heated discussions in the Mortimore household has not been recorded, but ultimately the protagonists compromised: Edward would wait until school let out in the spring, then take Martha and Evelyn north with him to Methow. Olive agreed to take Paul with her to Madras, where he could continue his sophomore year and join the family after the spring term. Merton, despite his father's wishes, refused to give up the postal job in Portland—and his nearly betrothed, Genevieve—for a return to ranch life. But he did agree to look for a homestead prospect near the family ranch, and to help his father make the move. Edward was happy with half a loaf. In mid-March 1915, the five travelers hitched the team to a loaded wagon, tossed in a puppy and a few young chicks, and struck out for Methow, leaving behind the cows and the rest of their possessions for the Bowermans.²¹

After three weeks of travel over poor roads in brisk weather, camping out along the way, the Mortimore family arrived at their new ranch. Mostly pastureland and scrub, except for a few acres of apples, the place had plenty of water for irrigation, but the hills precluded row crops. Edward should have learned something about the realities of farm life from the years spent struggling with the Madras homestead. Now a decade later on a Washington ranch that needed solid financial resources and the raw energy of a homesteader to make it pay, Edward must have sensed at age fifty that his task was hopeless even if his will



Figure 40 Snowed in at Methow

In 1915 Edward Mortimore traded city property in Portland for his sister's interest in a farm near Methow, Washington. The family arrived to find an untended apple orchard and this run-down farmhouse. They barely had time to harvest the apples and repair the roof before the long, hard winter kept them indoors most of the time. They lasted only one season, leaving in a wagon for Pendleton the following summer.

was strong at first. He was sorely disappointed that Merton would not stay, though Merton did promise to come back for a few weeks that summer. Paul showed little inclination for ranching pursuits other than a love of horses and hunting. He was a popular student at Madras, singing in the choir and becoming business manager of the yearbook. But music and business were only the attributes of a higher calling. By this time he had already made up his mind to enter the ministry. As he told Olive: "I always knew I had to preach."²²

Without strong help or much money and too little credit to buy essential equipment and supplies, Edward could do little to improve the Methow ranch. The apples were a potential cash crop, but the harvest was far away and they needed a lot of care. The board-and-batten farmhouse was badly run down, without running water or electricity. Edward spent the first week or two patching the roof, using Evelyn as "gopher" to fetch shingles. Martha, still in a negative mood, set out a vegetable garden and tended to her chickens. She "didn't think much

of that country,” Paul later wrote.²³ When he and Olive arrived from Madras a few weeks after their parents, the family settled in to a long season of hard work. Merton, as promised, returned for a few months, taking leave from his postal job in Portland to help.

Martha’s spirits rose with the whole family united and the summer sun brightening the green hills and pastures. The neighbors were friendly, and a community of Scots immigrants welcomed them as kinfolk with a common heritage. She joined in summer work and play alike, picnicking with the neighbors, plowing and hoeing the garden, taking short trips to Lake Chelan, gathering the eggs and milking the few cows Edward managed to acquire. But her disposition darkened as fall approached and the family again separated. Merton stayed long enough to pick the apples and pack them on a boxcar for the eastern auction market, but with the harvest in he returned to his postal job and sweetheart in Portland. The three younger children stayed in Methow. With no high school to attend, Paul stayed on the ranch that winter with little to do but enjoy the snow. Olive found ready employment in the local elementary school, with a higher salary as added incentive.

During the fall Olive and Evelyn, now in sixth grade, rode horseback five miles from the ranch to school—at least for the first day. Years later the two sisters reminisced about those Methow days, perhaps embellishing the story of Olive’s first ride wearing long skirts. To protect her dignity she borrowed a sidesaddle, and rode off in the dust in proper schoolmarm fashion. But dignity soon gave way to comfort. She came home astraddle, skirts flying. Next day Edward took her to school in the buggy.

For twelve-year-old Evelyn, Methow was a grand place where she could ride in the soft green hills, race bareback down dusty trails, explore the hills with her dog, and cozy up to the fire in winter. She had been a sickly child, but her childhood illnesses didn’t stop her from having fun. She was an endless tease, with red hair and freckles, and full of mischief and a handful to her mother, the disciplinarian in the family. Boisterous and saucy as a pet chimp, she could always “find things to do to aggravate people,” she told me late in life. At Methow

she spurted upward and grew strong with daily farm work and riding. Her father acquired an old saddle horse, “Redwing,” which she loved to race to school, even chancing the displeasure of her teacher, Olive, for kicking up the dust. Winter snow soon put an end to dusty roads as well as riding, but not to the fun. The powdery hills were ideal for downhill races on sleds or dishpans. Evelyn reveled in outdoor childhood sports, but not her more sedate older sister, who rented a small apartment in town to avoid having to travel in the cold. With her folks’ blessing she also took temporary charge of Evelyn, who lived with her until horseback season began again in spring.

With all the children but Paul away that winter, Martha and Edward spent days at a time on the ranch, deep in snow and pondering the future. Most farmers during World War I made money, but the Mortimores were dogged with bad luck and poor planning. They had hoped for a good return from their apple crop, but shipping apples eastward was a risky business even if the crop arrived in good shape. Independent growers were at the mercy of cash buyers and consignment shippers to eastern auction houses. Instead of a check in the mail, the Mortimores received a bill for the cost of shipment! Martha had never welcomed the move, and after the apple disaster even Edward was ready to move again. Olive told her father: “Sell the place and get whatever you can.”²⁴ Their chance came in 1916, when their old friends the Stockmans invited Edward to come back to work on their ranch near Pendleton. Eighteen years earlier as newlyweds they had worked for the Stockmans; now they decided to return, forsaking fee simple ownership for the more secure but humble status of hired hands. It took time to work out the details and sell the ranch and livestock, but by early summer the Mortimores were ready to move.²⁵

Finding Work in Umatilla County

W. Joseph Stockman held three sections of wheat and grazing land in Umatilla County, just across the Columbia River in eastern Oregon. To get there in one move the family rigged up a “covered wagon,” as Evelyn remembered it—really a freight wagon with a canvas top—for the heavy things, with Paul and his father taking turns as teamster. The



Figure 41 Olive's Methow School

For two school years during World War I Olive Mortimore taught the primary grades in this large one-room school house nestled under a glacial moraine at Methow, Washington. When school was out in 1916 she had tried to find another school in a district closer to her parents, who had moved to Pendleton, Oregon. But no school paid more than the Methow salary of \$90 a month. After the second year alone in the snow, however, she took a job at Pilot Rock, fifteen miles south of Pendleton.

rest rode in a farm hack, hardly more comfortable. It took nearly two weeks, camping out at night and resting on Sundays near a church, for to the Mortimore family regular attendance was compulsory even on the road. One night a group of Indians showed up, begging sugar from Martha. It was Chewelah all over again, where Indians from the Colville Reservation had entered the Mortimore home seeking food, but this time she had no "priest" to send them to.²⁶ She shared what she had. Olive rode with them as far as Umatilla, then took the train with Evelyn to Portland for a visit, leaving her folks and Paul to cross the ferry and ride on to the Stockman ranch, where the wheat harvest was about to begin.

As soon as they could the Mortimores rented a small house in Pendleton and settled in. Edward was busy all summer driving team for the huge combines that lumbered across the golden hills from daylight to dusk. When not working as a teamster he repaired harness and tended the horses. The work was hard and long, but the Stockmans were

more than just employers. Martha and Mrs. Stockman had become close friends over the years, and Paul found a young friend in their son Lowell, a friendly giant even taller than Paul. Evelyn, big and strong for a seventh grader, found a summer job helping a neighboring farmwife cook for the harvest crew, but after a few days away from home she was so homesick that Martha had to come rescue her. Olive decided to return to Methow after finding no teaching positions near Pendleton that paid more than the \$90 a month she had been offered in Washington. After a year alone in the snow, however, she took a job at Pilot Rock, fifteen miles south of Pendleton. By 1917 all the Mortimores except Merton were in or near Pendleton.

After the harvest Edward looked for work in town and readily found a job with the State Highway Department as road grader. His experience in Portland served him well, for he swiftly moved up to the senior position of “finisher,” the grader who stood over a long blade for hours, giving the final touch to macadamized county roads. The work was hard on his legs, which he began to wrap in ace bandages after varicose veins developed. But the pay was good and the work was steady. When Martha told about Edward’s work in a 1917 Christmas letter to her uncle Royal in Kansas, his reply contrasted Edward’s good fortune with the Tucker bad luck, starting with his failing kidneys, his wife’s rheumatism, the high price of fuel, a relative’s hard work in a laundry, and ending with “Oh this terrible terrible war.”²⁷ The year before he had described the same maladies, but added rupture of the bowels, a summer so hot that everything “burned up,” sky-high prices, a “disipated” brother-in-law, and a sister whose husband took what money they had saved and left her with three children. As an afterthought, he asked her to write and “tell what the Lord is doing for you.”²⁸ Perhaps Martha’s depressive moods were inherited.

The war that so upset Uncle Royal was also on Paul’s mind as he graduated from Pendleton High School in 1918. Though he wanted to continue his education, he ignored the scholarship offered from Willamette University—\$40 even in those days was not much. Instead, he entered Oregon Agricultural College, now Oregon State University, at Corvallis and immediately enrolled in the Reserve Officers Training

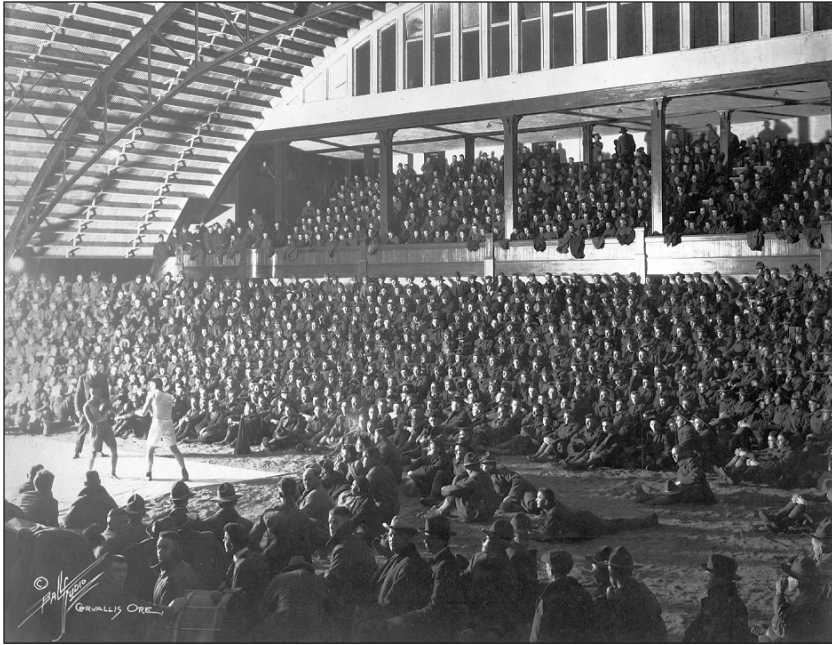


Figure 42 ROTC Boxing Match

Paul Mortimore's quest for an officer's commission during World War I took him to Oregon Agricultural College, now Oregon State University, where he joined 2,700 other young men in the Reserve Officer's Training Corps. Boxing matches in the campus auditorium gave cadets some relief from the monotony of a twelve-hour daily training regime.

Corps, the fastest route to a military commission. When he arrived in September he was inducted into the army and began ROTC training on the campus. The series of letters he wrote his folks back in Pendleton during the next three months provide a window into both basic training during World War I and Paul's hopes and expectations as a young recruit.

After the first week of active duty the new candidate was still in civilian clothes and without army blankets. He thought he would have to "sleep in the brush" until a college professor offered him a bed at home, fifteen blocks from campus. To report for duty at 6 a.m. required a very early bed call, but the reward was breakfast in the campus mess hall of mush, fruit, bread, and potatoes. Drill began at 8 a.m. and lasted until noon, then lunch followed by afternoon drill, retreat, and supper. After eleven hours of marching, with occasional breaks and

meals, the 2,700 men who made up the Corvallis unit were dismissed, to report again at 6 a.m. next day. Sundays were free, and Paul went to church. Many of his fellow recruits also attended, some seeking inspiration, while others sought relief from the boredom of drill. "It is a shame for the churches to treat a place like this with so little concern," he wrote. "The boys have no place to go Sundays but church and are willing to go there." Paul tried the Methodists first, but didn't like the preacher ("this was his first Sunday"), so for evening service he went to the Christian Church. For dinner he returned to his temporary home, offering telling commentary on the state of ethnic relations in that era. The "folks I stay with," he wrote, "are Jews, she a Russian and he a Hungarian. They are fine people tho and one would never know they were not American born."²⁹

The weeks wore on without uniforms or a change of procedure, though rumors floated that the unit would be shipped to Kentucky. Uniforms finally arrived just before 11 November. The Armistice ended the rumors but not the monotonous routine. Paul thought he would be "kept here till June," actually not a bad alternative to a young man without money. He wrote his mother that "it means a wonderful opportunity for an education.... The plans have not yet been worked out but it is certain the government is planning an education for every young man regardless of his financial abilities." That was a forlorn hope, not to be realized until after World War II, when Paul, as national chaplain of the American Legion, helped bring the G.I. Bill to fruition. But war's end in 1918 at least lifted the local restrictions on campus activities, as Paul playfully noted to his mother: "I have busted in to a whole house full of girls and it cheers a fellow up on rainy Saturday and Sunday afternoons to sit around a fireplace and talk to some girls."³⁰ By December, however, soldiering was finished, and so was Paul's brief tenure at Oregon State. He couldn't afford to stay on as a regular student. When the army unit disbanded just before Christmas, he headed for Portland to look for a job, but soon returned to Pendleton.³¹

While Paul was away, his parents moved to the Umatilla County Hospital, not as inmates but staff members. Edward's varicose veins made it unlikely that he could continue much longer standing on a

grader. With the encouragement of family friend W. J. Stockman, one of the county's most important citizens, the county commissioners offered Edward the job of managing the "poor farm," a branch of the hospital that cared for indigent senior men. Living in the big, two-story manager's house was a considerable step up from their small rental in Pendleton, but either the salary was too low or the responsibilities too many for Edward. He left most of the paperwork to Martha and kept his eye out for a county job more suitable to his peripatetic inclinations.

Their move to the county hospital grounds brought them closer to Louisa Tucker, Martha's widowed mother. "Grandma" Tucker's mental health had quickly deteriorated after her husband died in 1910, and the family committed her to the state asylum at Salem. In 1912 Pearl and John Peck decided to take care of her themselves at Culver. They built a one-room cottage behind their farmhouse, and the state released her to their custody, hoping that she would improve. Instead, she grew worse, showing classic symptoms of dementia. She lived in a world of her own, totally dependent but increasingly paranoid. One postcard she sent Martha in 1912 provides some indication of her mental condition:

[Pearl is] washing on her new washer John has gone ... in the oto
[auto] of corse, and I have a grafaphon to he ha he gave 10 drs
[dollars] with 30 reccords ha ye got ye eye on me has ye.³²

After running away several times, accusing the Pecks of taking her money, and growing ever more detached from reality, she was institutionalized again, this time at the branch asylum in Pendleton, not far from the county hospital. Evelyn visited her often, bantering back and forth like schoolchildren, making doilies, and listening fascinated while Grandma played tunes on her teeth. Louisa died in 1920, officially of "nayocarditis."³³

Edward's search for more suitable work paid off when Umatilla County offered him a job inspecting and labeling county property. The work required a vehicle—he had purchased his first horseless carriage a couple of years before—but he was reimbursed for expenses as he

drove all over the county stamping various tanks, trucks, and other machinery with an official stencil. Evelyn accompanied him on many occasions, not minding the open top with the wind in her hair and the dust in her face, and learning how to drive. By her late teens she was an avid car enthusiast, volunteering whenever a driver was needed, and impatient for a car of her own.

Pendleton was a growing community during World War I, with a good high school and a better annual rodeo, but it lacked a “holiness” church. Doctrinally the Nazarenes were close to Free Methodist teachings, both devoted to living a simple but demonstrable Christian life. The two denominations differed on some details—Free Methodists frowned on musical instruments in church, for instance, unlike the Nazarenes, who sang both acappella and with accompaniment. Both sects welcomed music in the home, however, and the Mortimores loved to sing. They sang whenever the spirit moved, with Martha or Evelyn playing accompaniment on the family organ. Paul developed a rich tenor voice that was the delight of his parents and an asset to his ministerial ambitions.

When the Mortimores first came to Pendleton they attended the United Methodist church along with their friends the Stockmans. But “holiness” teachings demanded more. Then one of Edward’s cousins, a Nazarene preacher from Walla Walla, came to town and helped organize the first Nazarene congregation in Pendleton. Edward stepped forward as interim pastor after obtaining a minister’s license and an evangelical commission from the regional Nazarene Assembly.³⁴

In the fall of 1918 the congregation hired a regular preacher from Texas, E. V. Buzbee. Popular with the church elders though young and just out of seminary, he started a drive that resulted in the construction of the first Nazarene church in Pendleton. A tall, dark, and skinny bachelor, “Brother” Buzbee was anxious to find a friendly family home away from home. Soon he was a regular visitor at the Mortimore household. Perhaps he had eyes for Evelyn, only fifteen when he arrived but rapidly blossoming into young womanhood. Others had cast their nets for Evelyn, but she proved too young and frivolous for potential suitors. In Methow a dour Scotsman, Angus MacKinnon, had



Figure 43 Evelyn and Buzbee

Evelyn Mortimore's playful pose in this casual snapshot is indicative of a warm relationship with E. V. Buzbee, a young Nazarene preacher from Texas. In one suggestive letter when she was sixteen that was perhaps never sent, she wrote, "Dear E.V.B. Well I thot Id surprise you and write, after you said there was no need of being timid." He seemed fascinated with the lively teenager, but whatever his intentions, he fell victim to the influenza epidemic in 1920. Evelyn's mother Martha led prayer vigils for "brother Buzbee" and escorted his coffin back to Texas.

seemed to fancy her, but she was still a child and considered him ripe for teasing like all her other friends. Brother Buzbee perhaps had more potential, but she toyed with him like a doll. He was kind and patient, made friends with all the relatives, and shared in their family fun. But the fun ended when he fell victim to the last vestiges of the great influenza epidemic that swept the country in 1919 and 1920. Martha led prayer vigils while he lay dying and escorted his coffin back to Texas. Her Bible records her thoughts at the time, verbalized in a passage from Hosea: "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up..."³⁵

Learning to Be a Preacher

Not all family members joined the Nazarene church in Pendleton. The church elders reasoned that holiness was a lifetime commitment that only adults could make. As a result, the Nazarenes did not accept chil-

dren or teenagers into full membership, nor did they promote youth programs. Evelyn attended church as an acolyte, perhaps because of Brother Buzbee. She sang with the choir and chorded the piano when the regular pianist was gone.

Paul, however, had other ideas. He had been influenced by William Boddy, a Free Methodist evangelist and orator who emphasized the importance of youth organizations in church.³⁶ Unlike the Nazarenes, the Disciples of Christ had a vigorous young people's group in Pendleton that had attracted Paul while he was still in high school. After the war he returned from Corvallis and joined the Disciples, also known as the Christian Church or Church of Christ, but came under the influence of Dr. Thomas A. Mangum, a Nazarene physician and medical missionary on the faculty at Northwest Nazarene College (NNC) in Nampa. "He was a wonderful person," Evelyn said later, a family friend who preached occasionally in Pendleton, took Paul under his wing, and promised him a job in Nampa if he would go to NNC to study medicine and religion. It sounded good, but after a few months in Nampa Paul grew disillusioned. Though formal school policy was tolerant of other faiths, he felt like an outcast for not joining their church. Besides, the Nazarene girls spurned him as a nonbeliever. "My, the study of medicine is fascinating to the extreme," he wrote sarcastically in a letter home. His comment after learning of Buzbee's building campaign is indicative of both his sour mood and his financial worries:

So you are trying to build a church. Well, I hope and pray for your success, even if it is a Nazarene Church. Hope you folks dont have to go into it too heavy. It seems as if this family just wasn't meant to prosper.³⁷

Seeking prosperity—and adventure—on his own, Paul in the spring of 1920 left NNC. About this time, though documentation is missing, he heard, or perhaps met, the great Canadian explorer, Vilhjalmur Stefansson. He was trying to organize another expedition to the "friendly Arctic," following his return in 1918 from the tragic adventure that

cost the lives of eleven team members after their ship was beset in the Beaufort Sea. Stefansson, so the family story goes, invited the youthful Mortimore to join the party, but after considering the proposal Paul declined. It was not the kind of spiritual quest he had in mind.³⁸

Instead of the far north, Paul went south. In 1920 he took a summer job under Ellison White, an organizer with the national Chautauqua movement. Though prosperity remained elusive, adventure came fast and furious for a young man who had never been far from home. The Chautauqua in Paul's time was a traveling road show, highbrow vaudeville for the culturally deprived, with heavy doses of religion and patriotism mixed in. It had started in the 1870s on Lake Chautauqua in New York, where a Chicago Methodist minister organized a summer conference to improve the training of Sunday-school teachers.³⁹ From there, the movement spread rapidly in both geographic scope and substance. By World War I, its greatest appeal was small-town America, little whistle-stops where advance men showed up to make local arrangements and erect huge tents for performances and lectures that went on for several days, sometimes a week or more.

Sent to join White's advance crew in Texas, Paul gave himself ten days to reach his destination, leaving Portland about 1 May, less than a month after his mother had returned from her sad escort duty. It was his first extended trip. Along the way, he took time out to see the sights, sending letters home full of exuberance. California was a "wonderful country," and San Francisco "simply grand." In the Central Valley he marveled at the rich farmland. "I wish I had a hundred acre ranch in this country.... Just think, they are cutting 1st crop of hay here! The weather is absolutely ideal," he exclaimed.

Traveling through the borderlands just a few years after Pancho Villa's raid into New Mexico, Paul's exuberant patriotism took on a militant tone. "My first town I find is almost on the Mex. border. Hope I get to scrap some Mexicans," he wrote. But his uniform, which he still carried from Corvallis, had to go. It was too heavy for the hot Southwest. "I'll have to get some lighter clothes as soon as I can afford it," he explained, at the same time asking for his favorite black hat to be sent to him in place of his army one.⁴⁰

Militancy changed to disgust once he reached the heart of the borderlands. With a “group of singers,” part of the Chautauqua troupe, he crossed the border at Douglas, Arizona into Agua Prieta, “a border town of course and wretchedly dirty and vile. We went into where they were gambling with all kinds of gambling apperatus, and the money was sure piled high. Mostly Chinese and half breeds run those places. Booze is pleantiful and of a rotten variety.” There were a few soldiers about, “poorly dressed and dirty, the only uniform they wear is a huge cartrige belt, or rather, several of them with cartriges as big as young cannon balls.” In contrast to the Mexicans, American soldiers in Douglas were well dressed and armed, ready for action if any trouble developed. But he need “hardly look for trouble now tho as the new rebel army seems to be friendly to the U.S. I hope the whole thing ends peacably.”⁴¹

Paul came home when the summer tour ended, full of stories and experience that would later serve him well as a preacher. He worked with his father on road crews that fall and winter. In the spring of 1921 Paul returned to Texas for the new Chautauqua season. Now an experienced hand, he could work faster but carried more responsibilities. In Orange he was busier “than a bunch of drowned out hornets. We have been having a regular southern Texas drencher and it has almost washed us away completely. I worked for several hours with the crew in a bathing suit the other night to save the tent.”⁴² After the rain came the oppressive heat. “I have burned my arms and shoulders to a beautiful crisp,” he wrote from Corpus Christi. “It is sure hot work putting up tents. Thank goodness it only comes once a week.”⁴³

Despite the weather, he still found the time to explore the countryside. “I have the tent up and nothing much to do now untill [sic] the show starts,” he wrote from Orange, noting the high prices for everything except cotton. The postwar depression in agriculture had already begun. “Cotton isn’t worth picking and they tell me they are burning it in the field lots of places.”⁴⁴ On the Gulf coast, he reported, “People here are all wishing they were up in the North. Wages are practically nothing and there is little or no work. I guess every one is in the same boat.” That made home seem a lot more interesting. “But of all the



Figure 44 Paul the Preacher

Paul Mortimore “always felt he had to preach,” but lacked formal training. To evangelical Christians in the early 1920s, credentials were not as important as heartfelt sermons. In 1923, after two years on the Chautauqua circuit and several seasons as guitar-playing soloist and traveling evangelist, he was ready for a church of his own.

country I have seen so far,” he told his relatives, “that around Pendleton offers the best living. I am sure I don’t know what you folks could do any where else for every job is taken, and wages are very low.” The cause, he felt, was somehow part of a corporate conspiracy, a common theme in rural America since the Civil War: “The oil fields have most all closed down. That seems queer with gasoline and oil so high, but it only shows the graft in the oil business. The small companies can’t find a market for their oil, and yet the Standard Oil Co. says there is a shortage. It is pure and simply a scheme to keep up the price.”⁴⁵

Paul gained maturity and valuable organizational experience during his two years on the Chautauqua circuit. It also taught him some handy vaudeville lessons: how to warm up an audience with laughter and magic, how to project feeling and personality into a sermon, how music could be used to attract young people. Perhaps those were lessons he already knew or instinctively felt from his earlier days in high school. But he still lacked ministerial training and experience. Formal training was not necessary in a day when penniless but streetwise evangelists like Aimee Semple McPherson could build a church empire from nothing but “pluck and personality,” to paraphrase a popular dime novelist of the era. Paul thought formal training was important, but he lacked the means to achieve it in his early years. Later he earned

some credits at Northwest Christian College in Eugene and ultimately gained an honorary doctorate of divinity degree, but that was after nearly thirty years in the ministry. More important than formal credentials was experience. Paul found his gospel voice in the early Twenties as soloist and assistant to “Teddy Leavitt’s Soul-Winning Team” of evangelists. Financed by the “freewill gifts of the people,” Leavitt promised to “take the gospel ... to the needy fields, i.e. rural communities, small towns, camps and remote places” to “lead sinners to Christ by ... methods of the apostles and New Testament evangelists.” From his home in Newberg, Oregon, Leavitt and his crew spent the summer months organizing Bible schools and churches in small towns throughout the Pacific Northwest. During the winter months they held revival meeting in established churches. For two years Paul accompanied Leavitt and a fellow evangelist, Cecil Warner, singing solos, leading the audience in song, playing guitar, and offering homilies to warm up the crowd before the main event.⁴⁶ By the spring of 1923, he was ready for a church of his own.

While Paul was traveling and learning the ropes as a soldier, organizer, and evangelist, the rest of the Mortimore family remained in eastern Oregon. After a year or two teaching at Pilot Rock, Olive took a school at Adams, thirteen miles northeast of Pendleton. When a second position opened she wrote to her Portland friend, Oa Calkins, also a teacher, who took the job. Oa and Olive worked together at Adams along with a third teaching friend, Grace Dubois, until Oa was married—at the Mortimore home in Pendleton—in 1921. Matrimony was on Olive’s mind as well, but it took her another four years to find the right man.

Evelyn was still in school when her older siblings left home. She had lost a semester of high school because of rheumatic fever while the Mortimores had lived at the County Poor Farm, but she was determined to graduate with her class. Despite an officious principal who tried to discourage her, she took enough correspondence courses to obtain the necessary credits and finished on schedule—even making her own graduation clothes and singing a solo at the Pendleton High ceremonies in 1921. In later years she often reminisced about her preco-

cious youth, her exuberance for life, and her physical strength. “I was a big, strong girl, and could do just about anything,” she said of her late teen years. But what to do with her life after high school was still in question, as it is with most teenagers. In the summer after graduation she visited her cousin Ouida Limbaugh in Fruitland, at that time the heart of southwestern Idaho apple country. Evelyn worked for a time in a packinghouse, but when the fall semester started she enrolled in Northwest Nazarene College at Nampa—the same school Paul had earlier tried for a semester. Dr. Mangum thought Evelyn would make a fine nurse. Doubtless he had heard from Martha about Evelyn’s efforts during the flu epidemic of 1919–20, when she had cared for several families and their children in Pendleton and Athena.

Her experience came in handy within weeks after the semester started, when an epidemic of “itch” broke out in the NNC dormitory, and she was called on to nurse several students who had been put in isolation. Whatever the cause, apparently it wasn’t serious. After a few days she returned to classes, but in November another “crisis” ended her brief NNC career. The Nazarene Church in Pendleton needed a pianist for a revival meeting. Evelyn went home during Thanksgiving vacation, played through the revival, and then decided she didn’t want to go back to Nampa. She had made several nurse’s uniforms while at NNC, and she had taken two months of classes. That, plus her practical experience earlier, constituted her nurse’s “training.” Now she went to work as a practical nurse in Hermiston, where her parents had rented a farm a few months earlier. Despite his poor legs, Edward was back with the Oregon State Highway Department, grading roads in northeastern Umatilla County. Evelyn lived at home but found steady work helping a country doctor deliver babies and handle other nursing chores while he made house calls throughout the community.

Marginal farm families faced difficult choices in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Many who stayed on the land during the boom years of World War I suffered from falling prices and a severe agricultural recession that began right after the war and only got worse

as recession gave way to depression after 1929. Moving to town had its own set of perils. For more than a century the city had served as an economic safety valve for agrarian discontent, but the social costs weighed heavily against the material benefits. Traditional family structures broke down under the pace and complexities of urban life.

As an example of how country folk tried to cope with the economic and social consequences of the First World War and its aftermath, the Mortimore family story is instructive. The Mortimores had started the century with limited means and inadequate education. Edward's desultory efforts to earn a living from the soil ended in failure twice, once in Madras and a second time in Methow. His alternative was to move to town, but for a man his age it was a Hobbesian choice. He lacked the training and experience necessary to qualify for an office job, and physical limitations forced him to move frequently in search of easier, if not better, blue-collar work. He was more fortunate than many other farm migrants, however, because he had skills adaptable to certain types of urban employment. He also had influential friends who helped him find suitable positions. By the second decade of the century he was earning a respectable wage as a road grader, but the work was hard and his earnings were inadequate to help his children. They had to make it on their own.

Like many former farmers, the elder Mortimores clung to rural traditions and lifestyles. Coming face to face with an urban culture they regarded as both materialistic and decadent, they added their voices to the progressive campaign for moral reform. Their podium was the evangelical church, an emotional haven for the rural poor cast adrift in a dark and turbulent urban sea. Through good times and bad, Edward and Martha were comforted by the proscriptive dogmas of "old-time religion."

The transition from rural to urban culture was easier on children than adults. Some youthful migrants were quick to join the "revolution in manners and morals" that characterized the social history of the twenties.⁴⁷ Other scions of agrarian America took the middle ground, making room for secular changes without abandoning the spiritual lessons of their youth. Among the latter were the Mortimore

offspring. They accepted city jobs out of economic necessity, but rejected lifestyle choices they considered immoral or unchristian. Ultimately, to both Mortimore generations, personal opportunity was not as important as faith and family values.

Turbulent Times, 1907–1922

Midwestern farm families had been coming to Oregon for nearly eight decades before the Missouri Limbaughs appeared late in 1904 via Grand Junction, Colorado, and Turner, Oregon. The first Missouri farmers, attracted by the verdant bottomlands of the Willamette Valley, arrived with the missionaries in the 1830s. So prominent were Missourians in western Oregon that nearly 30 percent of the delegates to the Oregon Constitutional Convention in 1857 were born or had lived in the “Show Me” state. Over the next two decades intermittent Indian wars and gold rushes interrupted the orderly pattern of farm expansion, but by the late 1870s arid interior lands that had been bypassed earlier grew more attractive to farmers and ranchers who found more humid lands farther west too crowded and expensive. At first, lack of capital and the scarcity of easily irrigated alluvial valleys left most of the state’s interior in the hands of stockmen, whose sheep and cattle roamed the open range with few restrictions until the late 1880s. But irrigation, the farmer’s panacea, expanded after the 1890s, especially in Idaho under Carey Act provisions, and in the rest of the interior after passage of the Newlands or Reclamation Act in 1902. By the close of the twentieth century’s first decade, small farmers with limited means were finding new opportunities on marginal lands east of the Cascades in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.¹

Unlike their clannish German ancestors, who migrated in nuclear family units from Pennsylvania to North Carolina and then to Missouri, the ten children of John W. Limbaugh found it difficult to keep together once they began their westward trek. The emotional ties that held them together could not overcome the economic realities that pulled them apart. The Missouri exodus that began at the turn of the twentieth century spread Limbaugh family members far and wide.² Some went directly to Oregon, attracted by newly opened homestead lands south of The Dalles. Others stopped for a time in Colorado before moving on to southern California and the Pacific Northwest. The daily communication made possible by living close together in Missouri gave way to exchanges of letters and visits that became less and less frequent with time and distance. Only photo albums and fragments of letters and clippings remain for the family historian, plus personal memories and interviews with a few family elders recorded many years ago.³

The First Idaho Limbaughs

As the first Limbaughs in Idaho, Pony and Pauline had few resources and limited opportunities their first few years. They arrived in Boise in 1907 from Turner, Oregon, with their first-born (Orrie, born 1905) and little more than the clothes on their backs. Southwest Idaho was beginning to recover from the long depression of the 1890s, but small farmers had an uphill struggle. Land prices in the Boise Valley took a sudden jump when the New York Canal project, stalled for many years, moved ahead in 1903 after obtaining Reclamation Act funding. To put food on the table, Pony worked as a ranchhand and carpenter, then in 1908 crossed the rolling hills to Emmett, where uncleared bench lands on what was then called the Mesa north of town offered good opportunities for hard-working farmers. To the south, along the lower slopes of Freezeout Hill, apple and cherry orchards had begun to take the place of sage and scrub, but the Emmett Mesa was still a sea of chest-high sagebrush. Speculators had already claimed much of the best land, although some bench and hill tracts were open to homestead entry. Unfortunately, by what means the Limbaughs first acquired

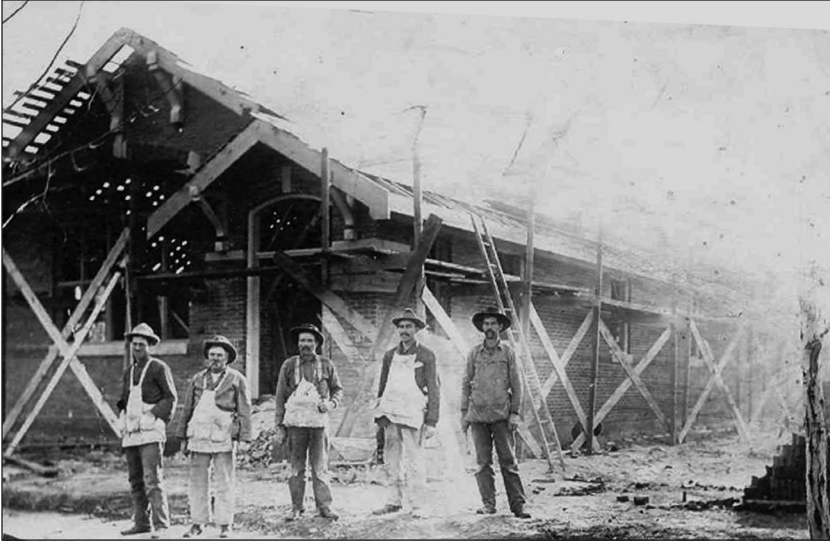


Figure 45 Pony in Boise

Pony Allen Limbaugh (far right in this picture) and his wife Pauline arrived in Boise in 1907, the first Limbaughs in Idaho. For a year Pony worked for wages in the Boise Valley until he could raise enough money to acquire a piece of unimproved farmland on the sagebrush mesa northwest of Emmett, near Pauline's relatives the Schadts.

bench land cannot be documented in sketchy county records. Pony may have taken up a homestead claim, or perhaps decided to lease land from an absentee owner for a few years until he could gather enough capital to purchase land himself. His grandfather-in-law, Fritz Schadt, had secured several parcels of bench land about the same time, and Pony may have worked his relative's land at first. Pauline's memory was unclear on the point when I interviewed her in 1967. But she did remember riding on a wagon that carried all their belongings, counting eleven houses scattered amid the sage as they first approached their new farm.⁴

The first years were the hardest, as any pioneer farmer could testify. Roads on Emmett Mesa were dusty tracks through the brush, wandering at will until surveyors completed the grid pattern and county supervisors raised enough taxes to start grading along section lines. Houses were haphazard affairs. Some lived in tents at first; others built rough, one-room cottages with board-and-batten framing on

the outside, peeled logs covered with planking, and galvanized iron or shingles for the roof. Inside, farmwives initially had to do without ceilings, insulation, walls, or flooring. Privacy was a luxury, even for growing families who shared both beds and bathwater. Furniture was homemade, often little more than cast-off boards, boxes and barrels. After dark, kerosene or “coal oil” lanterns generated what little light was needed, for farm families turned in early and rose with the dawn. Water at first came from the Payette River, hauled in barrels loaded on wagons. Few early farmers could afford the cost of drilling a well. On cold winter mornings farm families stoked their cast-iron cook stove, often purchased from a Sears or Wards catalog for as little as \$6.75, plus freight. Fuel was free and convenient at first, just outside the door. Every farmer and his family had the daily task of grubbing and gathering sagebrush. The work was hard but essential not only for fuel but also for clearing the land for planting. Clearing went on day after day, summer and winter, with all able-bodied family members participating. Sage not immediately needed for fuel was stacked in huge piles to dry or sometimes burned in bonfires when farmers were getting ready to plant. An accidental fire at Pony Limbaugh’s farm nearly brought down the house before the pile burned out.

Not far from the Limbaughs, W. H. Appel purchased 80 acres near the Hanna post office in the spring of 1909. His daughter Bernice later recalled the hard life of an early bench farmer. An Iowa immigrant, Appel spent the summer of 1910 clearing brush by himself, then planting 40 acres of Jonathan, Rome Beauty, and Arkansas Black apples by blowing holes in the dry soil with black powder. The next spring his family arrived in a boxcar at the railhead in Emmett with three horses and all their other possessions. Riding a lumber wagon through twelve miles of sagebrush to reach their lonely cabin was a tearful experience for Mrs. Appel. “That was the first and only time in the years that followed that I saw my mother cry,” her daughter wrote. During the early years a grasshopper invasion nearly destroyed their trees. Each evening family members loaded gunnysacks of hoppers shaken from the young trees and burned them in a fire pit. Periodic swarms of flying ants darkened the skies, “and they always settled on the chimney

and roof of our house,” Bernice insisted. Despite all these troubling memories, the Appels and their fellow pioneers believed that they were making positive contributions to Idaho development.⁵

Emmett Mesa settlers depended on irrigation water for economic survival. Annual rainfall was too low, and groundwater pumping too expensive and too problematical, for early farmers in southwestern Idaho. Their best option was surface water, brought in by canal, ditch, and flume from the tributaries of the middle Snake River. An early gravity-flow canal fed by the Payette River gave bench farmers a start but, as Hazel Nichols wrote, “was inadequate for the needs, and woefully insufficient when the river flow was low during the late summer and fall months. Often the men who had already spent long days at hard physical labor would have to get up in the middle of the night to change the water so that none of it would be wasted and to save their crops.”⁶

In 1908 Pony and other farmers joined what became the Emmett Irrigation District, and began work on a larger gravity-flow canal. It tapped the Payette River below Horseshoe Bend and meandered a dozen miles or more on the north side of the river along the river bluffs and around the rolling hills below Squaw Butte. Building the canal was a major undertaking for farmers equipped with only horse-drawn earth-moving equipment. Learning from Mormon experience in southeast Idaho, southwestern Idaho farmers at first used Mormon slip scrapers for ditch building. By 1910 wheeled scrapers had begun to replace these earlier machines. Ditch builders also used the ubiquitous Fresno scraper, which came in three sizes, for two, three, or four horses, each operated by a single strong-armed teamster who walked behind the loading bin, maneuvering the machine by a heavy iron handle that stuck out like a long tail. It was a useful tool in the farm country, but dangerous to both man and beast. Designed with a sharp cutting blade behind skids that lifted and dumped the load when the operator pushed up the handle, the scraper worked well on loose and sandy soil, but in muddy, brushy, or rocky ground the blade could suddenly stick or twist, jarring the handle sometimes with enough force to break the arm of the operator. Worse was the tendency of the skids to stick

while the scraper was upended in the process of dumping its load. If the operator didn't have a good grip on the guide rope attached to the end of the handle, it could suddenly flip forward, slamming down with terrific force on anything in its way. Many a good horse had to be shot after breaking its leg in a Fresno scraper accident. Runaways were also a constant danger to both crews and horses during canal building, especially if teams included young draft animals not used to the raucous mixture of sights, smells, and sounds of a busy construction site.⁷

Wandering sinuously along the foothills above the Payette River, the northside canal brought water to thirsty crops, but at \$17 per acre-foot, the price was high. Most members of the irrigation district paid at least part of their assessment in labor, for annual canal maintenance was essential to keep the water flowing. Each winter, after the last crops were in, farmers gathered at a designated canal site with their teams and equipment. Some worked on flumes, others deepened the canal or repaired its banks; still others cleared weeds and brush, or repaired weirs and head gates. Ivyl Hankins worked on the canal during the winter of 1912–13, retiring after work each day to a framed tent near the construction site. While he scraped the bottom with a Fresno behind a team of horses, his wife Sadie helped cook for the crew. Nearly always on the verge of bankruptcy, the company paid its few hired workers in scrip, which was “difficult to redeem,” recalled a family member.⁸ During the spring and summer, farmers were also called out to handle emergencies—a frequent occurrence in a country where unlined ditches, sandy banks, and wooden flumes were involved.

Once the sagebrush had been cleared, farmers used Fresnos and slip scrapers to flatten the badger mounds and level the ruts, but most had neither money, time, nor proper equipment for serious grading or leveling. Horse-drawn walking plows and corrugators prepared the sandy loam for planting and watering. On the Emmett Mesa grain and hay were the commonest early plantings; later farmers tried a variety of row crops, including corn, beans, sugar beets, even watermelons and cantaloupes, though garden crops were never more than a small percentage of the total acreage.

The Orchard Business in Southwest Idaho

Many farm families planted orchards. Prosperity bloomed for most Pacific Northwest farmers in the years just before and during World War I, when the American breadbasket supplied both Allied and Central powers with vast quantities of food and fiber. In Southwest Idaho, a horticultural boom developed after 1906 as new rail lines and refrigerated boxcars expanded the market for perishable goods. Fruit trees in plantings of 20, 40, or 60 acres and more spotted the lower valleys of the Weiser, Payette, Boise, and Snake Rivers. Testing the climate and soil conditions, orchardists experimented at first with a variety of stone fruit crops, but most eventually specialized in apples, prunes, or cherries that could best withstand late spring frosts and the rigors of shipping long distances. By 1911 Idaho's fruit plantings had grown to 140,000 acres, nearly triple that of 1905.⁹

High prices for fruit in these prewar years led to immense speculation. Promotional land and fruit companies acquired large tracts along the alluvial valleys of southern Idaho, dividing them into small parcels and selling them to small farmers for handsome profits. Prices for cultivated fruit acreage skyrocketed. From \$200 per acre in 1910, land values around Emmett rose to an astronomical \$1,000 per acre for bearing trees by 1912.¹⁰ Slick brochures with alluring illustrations in full color played on the vanity of prospective buyers. Indicative is this 1912 exhortation from a Chicago-based company:

The man we want: 1. The discontented man. The man who wants to better himself. 2. The intelligent, progressive man who has will-power to match. 3. The man who can realize that 5% in Ohio may be raised to 500% in Idaho. 4. The man who is leading a dead-and-alive existence in some indoor business but wants the sunshine and ten times as large an income. 5. The man who sees he can clear from \$3000 to \$8000 a year from a ten-acre apple orchard in Idaho like his neighbors. 6. The man who would be ashamed not to do as well as his neighbors over the line-fence.

The man we don't want: 1. The fellow who is satisfied right where he is. 2. The man who believes in letting well enough alone and won't try for anything better. 3. The farmer who will slave all year upon 100 acres for what he can clear on an acre-orchard in Idaho. 4. The business man and investor who is satisfied with five or six per cent. 5. The pessimist who cannot, or will not, believe in the better things of life. 6. The fellow who expects his trees to do all the work.¹¹

The largest single horticultural tract in the Pacific Northwest, perhaps in the nation, was Mesa Orchards, began in 1908 as a local promotion by the Weiser Land and Water Company. By 1912 the firm had purchased 1,600 acres near Council and was offering 10-acre tracts for \$500 per acre and ten shares in the affiliated water company. At its height the company had "its own village, ... school, garage, and combination store and post office" as well as a four-mile aerial tramway to connect packing sheds with a railway siding at Mesa. Ice-cooled refrigerator cars and ocean freighters hauled Idaho fruit to markets both domestic and abroad.¹²

Emmett's frenetic prewar fruit promotion was a magnet that brought hundreds of newcomers to Payette Valley, then part of Canyon County. This was the local region's biggest fruit boom since the development of New Plymouth by a colony of midwestern farmers at the turn of the century.¹³ By 1910 the influx led to the inevitable clamor for spoils by the county's northern newcomers. A county bond election for two bridges across the Payette River, one at New Plymouth and one at neighboring Fruitland, failed by 20 votes of achieving the required two-thirds majority. Leading the opposition was Ed Dewey, scion of Nampa railroad and mining magnate "Colonel" Dewey, "who had automobiles out getting voters to the polls," reported an indignant Emmett newspaper editor.¹⁴ The Dewey interests controlled the Idaho Northern, Emmett's only rail line in 1910, running from Nampa across the sandy hills to Emmett. A year later Dewey lost his rail monopoly when the Payette Valley Extension Railroad, a front for E. H. Harri-man's Oregon Short Line, completed Emmett's second line, a spur



Figure 46 Spraying Apples

Southwest Idaho experienced a horticultural boom in the first two decades of the 20th century as new rail lines and refrigerated boxcars expanded the market for perishable goods. Fruit trees blossomed along the lower valleys of the Weiser, Payette, Boise, and Snake Rivers. Apples withstood late frosts better than other stone fruits, but had to be sprayed frequently to avoid the codling moth and other pests. Note the women and children riding on this spray rig as the men drenched the trees with lead arsenate, a favorite in the days before the development of DDT and other more deadly pesticides.

running up the Payette Valley from Payette through New Plymouth. The next year Harriman interests absorbed the “Dewey Road” and began an extension north from Emmett to McCall.¹⁵

With new rails, more settlers, and expanding local trade and industry, talk of a Canyon County split gained headway after 1910. However, local infighting among the two population centers, Emmett and Payette, delayed the breakup until a three-way division could be formulated. Gem County finally achieved its “independence” from Boise Valley voters in 1915, followed by Payette County two years later. By World War I, Emmett’s population had reached 2,500, and local promoters predicted a rosy future for the new Inland Empire in the Pacific Northwest.¹⁶

As the orchards expanded, Emmett's fruit industry developed into two distinct districts, largely defined by meteorological conditions.¹⁷ The breezy sunny slopes to the south and east of town, less conducive to frost than bottomland or flatland orchards, specialized in cherries and apricots. They were more vulnerable to frost but reached market the earliest. North and west of town, the Emmett Bench grew mostly apples and prunes—more frost resistant but harvested later in the season. Both districts grew peaches, with varietal differences dependant on both weather and market conditions. Frost was a disaster to orchardists and a dirty word to publicists. An Emmett editor hotly disputed a Boise Valley journalist's claim in the late spring of 1910 that "the murcury [sic] for three nights last week was as low as twenty-two and twenty-three degrees in the vicinity of Payette, Boise, New Plymouth and Emmett."¹⁸ But frost took its toll periodically, in some years wiping out the entire fruit crop and eventually contributing to the decline of horticulture in both Gem and Payette Counties.¹⁹

On the Emmett Bench, two huge promotions on the eve of World War I added substantially to the district's development. In 1910 local papers, with great fanfare, announced the organization of Idaho Orchards, an eastern corporation funded by Chicago investors. Led by A. M. Huyeke, a "prominent capitalist and promoter of the east," the company purchased over 800 acres above Falk's Store and began a massive transformation of the landscape. By 1911 the sagebrush had been scraped off, the land leveled, plowed, harrowed, and dragged, and 40,000 apple and prune trees planted in precise rows lined up by engineers with transits. While General Manager J. R. Field directed local company operations, company realtors sold 5- and 10-acre parcels to eager buyers. In the prewar years, when a carload of Emmett apples could be sold to Boston wholesalers for \$2.50 a box, the company and its buyers did well. But many years of bad weather and poor markets lay just ahead.²⁰

Somewhat smaller than Idaho Orchards, but still an extraordinary development on the Emmett Bench, was the 500-acre Rolling Hills Orchards, a family company started by C. A. Glass of Los Angeles in the prewar years. In the twenties, after the founder's premature death, his

family sold it to a Los Angeles fruit marketing firm who operated it until the late 1950s, when Brigham Young University purchased it at bargain prices after most of the trees had been killed by a deep freeze. Today, though still known by its original name, the tract produces grain and row crops grow where thousands of apple and prune trees once stood.²¹

Limbaughs and Schoenings on the Emmett Bench

Between these two large orchards and for several miles around, the sagebrush tablelands of Emmett Mesa rapidly gave way to dozens of small farms and orchards in the years between 1907 and World War I. Most were 20- and 40-acre tracts, similar to Pony and Pauline's acreage just north of Central Mesa School. In the spring of 1910 a new settler arrived on the bench. Henry Schoening, a stocky, hard-working German immigrant with steel-rimmed spectacles and a Teddy Roosevelt mustache, came to Emmett from Wyoming after the death of his first wife. He purchased 80 acres of sagebrush due west of the Rolling Hills orchard and started clearing. Camping out on a neighbor's place at first, he grubbed away all summer and by fall was ready to plant 40 acres of Winesaps, then the premium apple on the bench. That still left him with 40 acres of uncleared land. Figuring that he needed only 20 more, in October he sold the extra 20 for \$2,000 to another newcomer, an elderly widower from Oregon who brought with him several unmarried children, one of them recuperating from polio.²²

The purchaser was John W. Limbaugh, Pony's father, who had lost his wife to breast cancer four years before. He may have visited his Idaho relatives earlier, and most certainly had met Henry Schoening through his son, Pony, who had probably learned of Schoening's decision to sell part of his holdings. But at the age of fifty-eight, the senior Limbaugh was too old to start tilling the soil. So why did he sell his house and 50-acre tract in the red hills of Turner, Oregon, and buy 20 acres of raw farmland in Idaho?

Personal motives are always hard to discern, especially nearly a century after the fact. But from the evidence left behind in newspapers, correspondence, and reminiscences, several possibilities come to mind.

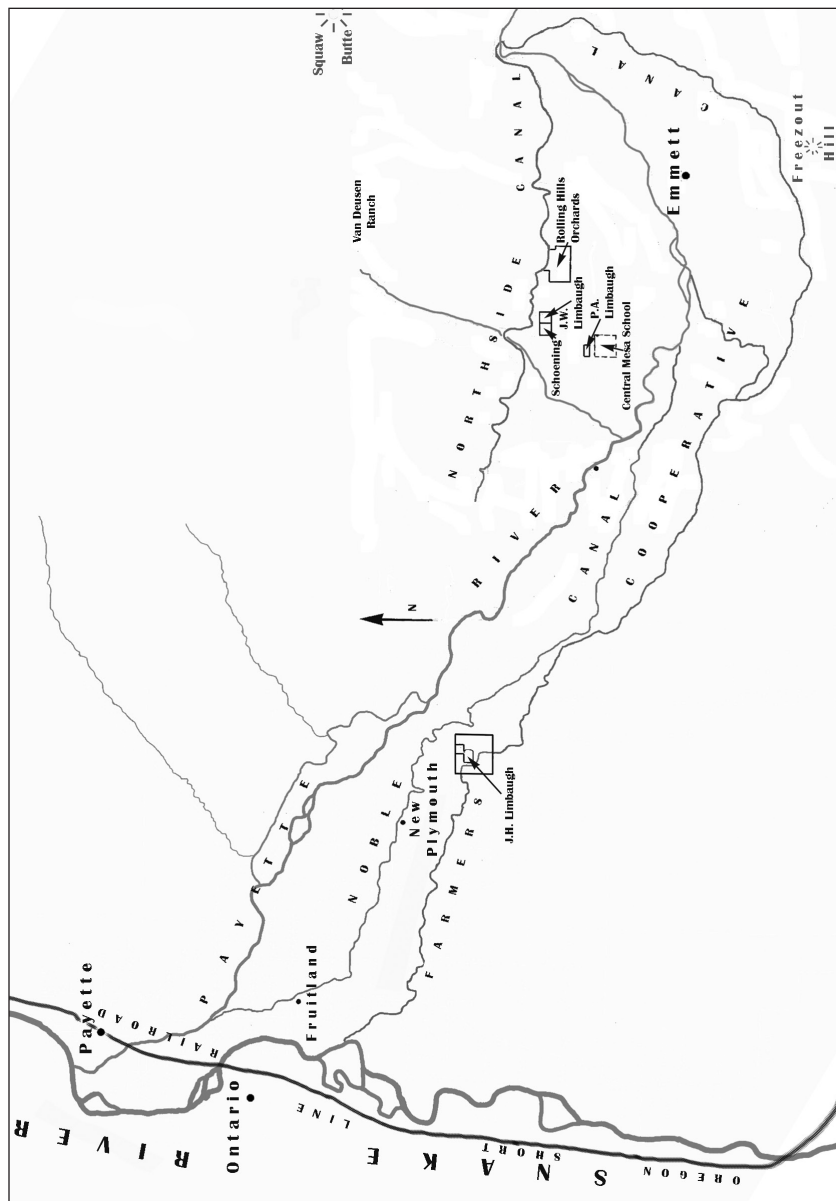


Figure 47 The Payette Valley

The most obvious was profit. If times were right there was money to be made in fruit. John W. had sold an apple orchard in Colorado for a handsome profit a few years before and doubtless was aware of the boom times in Payette Valley. On the other hand he was a carpenter by trade and had more interest in construction than farming. Everywhere he had lived before coming to Idaho he had built houses, barns, even commercial buildings. Perhaps he figured that he could invest in bench land, make a few improvements, and sell out for a quick profit, as he had done several times before.

As the father of eleven children in a close-knit family, the welfare of his ten living sons and daughters, especially those who still lacked families and homes of their own, also weighed heavily on him. Pony's farm lay nearby. He had encouraged his father to invest in land that his sons could help clear and farm. John W.'s youngest child, seventeen-year-old John Hadley, had been bedridden for months after coming down with polio while working on a railroad in central Oregon. He was still recuperating at his elder brother Imandra's ("Andra's") home in Culver when his father decided to move. They came together to Pony's place at first, where Hadley struggled with a badly crippled leg. Pauline remembered rubbing his legs to ease the pain after long hours learning to walk again by stepping back and forth over a broomstick. Three years older than Hadley was Elzia Edwin ("Elzie"), able-bodied at twenty and still unmarried. He had learned some carpentry skills from his father and was willing enough to serve as ranchhand or rough carpenter wherever he could find work. Twenty-three-year-old Elora ("Loy"), though practically on her own, also traveled with her family to Idaho, looking for work and perhaps a husband as well. However, jobs for women on the Emmett Bench were limited to teaching, house-keeping, nursing, and canning—all part-time. Loy had little interest in teaching and lacked even a grade school diploma, as did her siblings, but she did everything else to help earn a living.

Then there was Virgie, a special case. Two years older than her sister Loy, she had left her father's "nest" soon after her mother died and had found work in central Oregon close to her older brother Andra. Tall, dark, and prim, with snapping black eyes under heavy eyebrows—

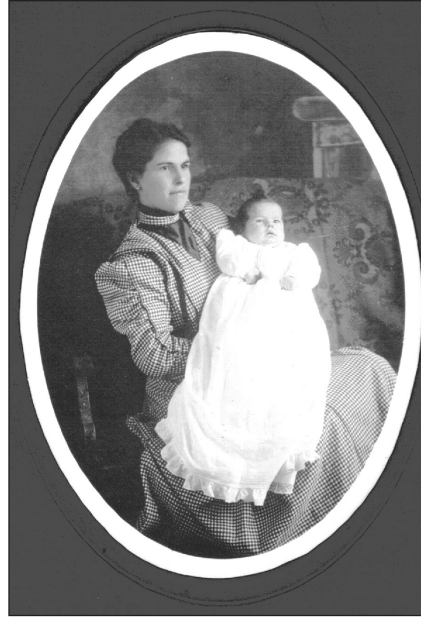
a distinctive family trait—she was a striking, attractive young lady. Her personal history before coming to Idaho has been buried in the deep recesses of the family closet, but rumors and innuendo have kept alive the traces of her past. I knew her as a matronly aunt, devout and conscientious, austere and stern, with a withering glance that could frighten young children. Only after she died in 1968 did I begin to link together some of the stories with newspaper items and other pieces of a family puzzle that no longer mystifies.

During her youthful years in central Oregon she evidently held a job as office secretary for a well-drilling firm headed by F. M. Loveland, a Colorado rigger who had come west in 1904. His skills were in great demand in Crook County. The high plateau homesteads near Culver and Madras lacked potable water. Much of the available surface supply had been contaminated with typhus, and probably other toxic microorganisms as well. There were a number of outbreaks of typhoid fever in the area, and we have already noted the polio outbreak in 1910 that brought down John Hadley Limbaugh and others. Pioneer farmers near Culver and Madras labored to haul potable water up an 800-foot canyon wall to their homesteads. Those who could afford it dug wells, but with groundwater at 300 feet it took an experienced driller to bring in a good supply. Loveland's company, therefore, had plenty of work to do, more than he and his sons could handle. As the business grew, Loveland hired more men, some of them experienced roustabouts who had worked in the midwestern oilfields, others who were new to the business but eager for a weekly wage.²³

Just when J. C. (J. A.?) Carthon came to work for Loveland, and just how long he worked or where he came from, cannot be discerned from the scanty evidence available. His name appears only a few times in the local papers, and no trace of him has been discovered in census records or other government documents. But it is clear that he worked for Loveland and Company long enough to meet and marry Virgie Limbaugh in 1907. Three years later the union was consummated by the birth of a child in the Prineville hospital. The moment was both happy and tragic, as the *Prineville Review* explained:

Figure 48 Virgie and Elwood

An attractive young lady originally from Missouri, Virgie married a well-rigging roustabout in central Oregon who abandoned her after their first child, Elwood, was born. In 1911 she and the baby accompanied her father to Idaho for a fresh start. Two years later she married a hard-working farmer and next-door neighbor, Henry Schoening. They raised a family of their own on the Emmett bench, and lived in the same farmhouse for the rest of their lives.



Coincident with giving birth to a baby daughter, Mrs. J. C. Carthon this week finds herself a deserted wife. Carthon, who had been working at Madras, disappeared the first of the week and left no trace. After he had gone it was discovered that he had borrowed all the money he could from his friends and overdrew his wages \$30. Mrs. Carthon would have been left destitute but for her brother, a man named Limbaugh, who also lives near Madras. Several parties are diligently searching for Carthon, but so far he has managed to elude pursuit.²⁴

Oddly, the “daughter” reported above was actually a son, Elwood, who learned the truth about his parentage only after he had grown to manhood and was married with children of his own.

As with most family stories from long ago, what was then scandalous is now commonplace. Changing values in American culture have lifted the moral strictures of church and society that once stigmatized wayward individuals. Virgie’s plight was not unusual, even for that day, but the strong religious beliefs of her Mennonite relatives, as well as her own deeply felt religious fundamentalism, must have exacerbated the



Figure 49 Packing Shed

During the southwest Idaho fruit boom, canneries and packinghouses grew up alongside railroad tracks to process regional produce. Operated by large commercial brokerages as well as independent growers, these plants hired temporary crews like the workers shown here outside a Payette Valley packing shed. They sorted and packed apples and other produce into refrigerated boxcars added to special fruit trains and shipped on consignment to eastern auction houses or marketed through cooperative associations.

situation and added to her misery. She was desperate to leave central Oregon after this sorry episode, and her father must have felt her pain. Moving to Idaho was therefore an escape as well as an opportunity for a fresh start in life.

While John W. Limbaugh and his children worked at clearing the land and building a house, hard-working neighbor Henry Schoening cultivated his apples and planned many improvements. Not a bachelor by choice, Henry also wanted company. No doubt he was a familiar sight at gatherings organized periodically by families on the Emmett Bench. An Independence Day event in 1910 typified the social activity: "The family picnic dinner was enjoyed by all," wrote the social columnist for an Emmett paper, "and especially by the bachelors.... A number of games were played and in the afternoon a base ball game between the Mesa nine and the Emmett Fruit Growers, completed the program."²⁵ Henry and his neighbors traded work, and, as the com-

munity developed, so did Henry's interest in his immediate neighbor's eldest daughter, Mrs. Carthon. They were married two years later, in a quiet ceremony in Ontario, Oregon. Little Elwood became Henry's son, and as the farm prospered so did the Schoening family. Soon there were additions, beginning with Marjorie (born 1913), then Pearl (1916), and finally Henry Jr., better known as "Hank" (1921).

As fruit farmers the Schoenings made money when times were good, and so did their neighbors. Growers and merchants alike poured cash into improvements in the prewar years. Packinghouses sprang up near the newly completed railroad tracks, and refrigerator cars loaded with Emmett apples, cherries, and prunes joined a steady procession of fruit trains from other parts of the Pacific Northwest heading to eastern markets. To expedite handling and improve marketing, some of the larger growers built packinghouses in their own orchards and shipped directly via the Emmett Fruit Grower's Association, a local cooperative patterned after the highly successful California orange growers co-op that shipped under the Sunkist label. In the summer of 1914, for example, George E. Hall built a fruit dryer on his ranch southeast of Emmett next to his cannery, anticipating a jump in European demand because of the outbreak of war. Fruit co-ops in the Pacific Northwest, however, lacked the marketing power and financial resources of well-established commercial brokerages such as Chicago-based Denney & Company, whose regional manager, F. H. Hogue, solicited business by telling growers he wanted their fruit because he had "a big family to feed and there is a hole in my shoe covered with cardboard." By 1916, Denney owned a majority of stock in the Emmett Co-op, and Denney's packinghouses at Emmett, Fruitland and New Plymouth handled a significant share of Payette Valley fruit.²⁶

Though not in the same league as the big growers, the Schoenings and Limbaughs nevertheless contributed their share to the county economy by spending their money locally on property and improvements. Henry and Pony both leased more land and bought new horseless carriages in 1914. After the crops were in that fall they had additions built on their farmhouses—an example followed by the McMillans, Craigs, Hankins, Burdells, and other neighbors. In true

booster spirit, the Emmett press saw a clear connection between social progress and benevolent geography: “No wonder the people look so prosperous on the Emmett mesa; you should see the crops, especially the corn. It can’t be beat.”²⁷ Pony and Pauline were so pleased with their new five-room “cottage” that they held a grand opening. As a jocular journalist reported:

Mr. and Mrs. Pony Limbaugh had a house opening Friday night in the form of a dancing party. About 70 guests were invited. Miss Iva Sorenson and Lon Sorenson furnished splendid music. At midnight refreshments were served by Mrs. Limbaugh. The new residence proved to be a good one—it was still standing the next day.²⁸

Next door to the Schoenings, John W. Limbaugh and his children also made improvements on their 20-acre farm. His skills as a carpenter were in demand throughout the neighborhood. After finishing his own home and barn, he helped Pony with his new house, and Henry Schoening as well. Other neighbors sought his help with home additions, barns, well digging, and even machinery repairs. Most of these buildings have disappeared, though the Schoening place remains a modest monument to John W.’s handiwork.

His presence brought other family members to Emmett. Late in 1911 or early 1912 Pony’s younger brother Bennett and his wife, Minnie, and infant son, Wyvis, arrived from North Powder, Oregon, and rented a place on the bench near their relatives. Young Hadley, gathering strength after the bout with polio, moved in with them—perhaps to demonstrate his own manhood. He had been living with Pony and Pauline and while still recuperating tried to catch up on his education, sadly lacking because of the family’s frequent moves and his long illness. For a time he attended Central Mesa School along with his nephew Ora (“Orrie”) and his niece Idella, Pony’s eldest children, but quit after finishing the seventh grade. At age nineteen, he couldn’t stand the embarrassment of sitting in class next to seven-year-old Orrie and being called “Uncle Hadley.”



Figure 50 John Hadley Limbaugh on a Slip Scraper

After recuperating from polio, John Hadley Limbaugh lived on the Emmett Bench with his older brother Bennett and his wife, Minnie. After Bennett became foreman at the Van Deusen ranch on Bissell Creek, he hired his younger brother, first to help with the haying, then as irrigator and general farmhand. Hadley holds the reins in this photo while an unidentified hired hand clowns a bit, perhaps at the displeasure of one of the Van Deusen brothers standing in the foreground.

For the next fifteen years Hadley lived in and out of Bennett's household. The two brothers became very close, as Minnie explained many years later. To her children, Wyvis and then Delmar ("Duke," 1916), Uncle Hadley was like an older brother—and a great tease who occasionally dangled Duke out the window by his heels.²⁹ Bennett and Hadley worked together at Emmett and elsewhere. An experienced cowhand and farmer, Bennett found ready work with the Van Deusen brothers when he first came to the bench. They had several large cattle and sheep ranches above Emmett, including sizable hayfields along Bissel Creek. Bennett labored first as hired hand and eventually as foreman at the Bissel Creek ranch.³⁰ He hired Hadley first to help with the haying, then as irrigator and general farmhand.

With family gathered around him, and with children nearly all on their own, John W. Limbaugh grew restless. He thought it was time to do something for himself. Late in 1914 he traveled alone to Missouri on an extended trip. It was announced as a chance to visit old

relatives and spend the winter, but when he returned a month later he brought back a surprise package—indeed, three surprises, a new Mrs. Limbaugh and her two grown children. Somewhere along the way he had met, and married, Louisa Beymere, apparently a divorcee from St. Joseph, Missouri. Her son, Fred, stayed long enough to get acquainted, then returned to Missouri. Her daughter, Kate, moved in with her mother and stepfather. The regional social editor of the Emmett press gracefully accepted this *fait accompli*: “We think Mr. Limbaugh deserves this good wife and we welcome her into our neighborhood,” she wrote.³¹

But among Limbaugh family members there were mixed reactions. Though Loy was only a part-time resident—she was a live-in nurse and maid for many families on the Emmett Bench and elsewhere—her younger brother Elzie still lived at home while working as hired hand and mechanic in the Emmett area. He liked his new sister-in-law so much he married her two years later. Other family members were not so pleased to have new rivals for their father’s affections. Among family insiders Louisa soon became known as “the Old Lady” who spent money unwisely, traveled extensively, and brought about the inevitable divorce. John W.’s second marriage, however, lasted longer than Elzie’s first. Elzie broke up with Kate after a couple of years of unhappy togetherness. In 1918, his father and Louisa surprised relatives again by selling the Emmett place and opening a restaurant in Boise. However, after a few months they moved once more, this time to Salem, Oregon, where John W. purchased several lots on the north side of town. With the help of another son, Julius, a skilled carpenter in his own right but a gambler who seemed always on the run, John W. built several new houses, including one for himself and one for his now separated wife across the street. She lived there for years before they were finally divorced—much to the relief of his relatives. In the meantime, John W. turned over his Salem home to his daughter Loy, who by then was the wife of Joe Reynolds, a jocular Irishman with a steady job in a paper mill. From then on the senior Limbaugh was a happy tenant, cared for by his daughter until he died peacefully in 1944 at the age of ninety-two.

Though coincidental, John W.'s departure from Idaho marked the beginning of the end of Emmett's flush years as a fruit district. Fruit growers had a preview of the hard times ahead in the spring of 1916, when a heavy killing frost blanketed the entire Payette Valley. With temperatures down to 24 degrees in an era before smudging or other forms of fruit protection, few farmers escaped disaster. Despite the widespread chill, Henry Schoening remained optimistic. "I'm going to have apples," he told an Emmett reporter. "I'll bring a branch in and prove it." The journalist remained skeptical. "We dare him," he replied.³²

Whether he took the dare is unknown, but Schoening's optimism was unfounded. Price declines after World War I, rising competition from other fruit districts, increased production costs, overseas trade restrictions, and growing problems with fruit pests and quality control—all took their toll.³³ By the late twenties Henry had pulled his orchard—as had many of his neighbors—and turned to other, more reliable, crops. He also diversified his business interests, contracting for small construction jobs, laying culverts, and grading roads. Growing economic interests brought him into local politics. He served on the school board for a number of years, became supervisor of road construction for Emmett Mesa, and represented fellow farmers as a board member of the Emmett Irrigation District. Adapting to changing conditions during the turbulent twenties gave Schoening the experience he needed to survive the severe economic storms that lay ahead.

His brother-in-law, Pony Limbaugh, was not so fortunate. Like many other farmers on the Emmett Bench, he was ambitious and overly optimistic during the prewar years. Mostly with borrowed capital he built a new house, leased more farm acreage, bought a new four-cylinder Allen (a popular touring car until the company went out of business in 1922), and stretched the family budget by entertaining guests and taking weekend vacations and shopping trips, hoping that his luck would last. It didn't. Even in good years there were premonitions. He spent one winter setting out apple and peach trees, but dug them out a few years later, deciding that the poor results were due to inferior varieties.

For a while he did better growing grain and hay, then raising sheep and hogs. He also hired out as a carpenter to the Van Deusens and other neighbors, but by 1918 the mounting bills forced him down a financial road familiar to many small farmers in the twenties and thirties: leveraging his debt through chattel mortgages. First on the block was the Allen, which brought him \$450 for six months. Next year he mortgaged his alfalfa crop—58 acres for \$100. In 1920 his livestock brought another \$450, with renewals every six months for lesser sums—all at the inexorable 5 or 6 percent interest. By the fall of 1922 everything he owned was mortgaged to the hilt. With crop prices at their lowest in years and no end in sight to the recession that left rural American perched on a financial precipice that finally collapsed in the thirties, Pony took the only road out. He walked away and left what remained for the banks and other creditors. With his family he headed for Oregon to start all over as a day laborer.

The Limbaughs, Schoenings, and other farm families lived through good years and bad on the Emmett Bench. Their early struggles to reclaim the sagebrush desert paid off in productive croplands, extensive irrigation canals, improved transportation systems, and developing centers of trade and industry. In the prewar years they saw themselves as constructive pioneers, the direct progeny of wilderness conquerors and town builders who had marched across the continent in 200 years of American progress. When bad weather, falling commodity prices, and other farm maladies began to alter the rosy optimism that had prevailed in the heady days before and during World I, Emmett farmers—like farmers everywhere before and since—saw themselves as victims of forces beyond their control.

Many fought back, joining cooperative production and marketing organizations, vocalizing their discontent through the National Grange, the Farmers Union, and other advocacy groups, retrenching and diversifying and taking part-time jobs to keep farm and family intact. But inexorably almost all those who cultivated the soil for a living descended down the vortex of debt that eventually ruined thousands

of small farmers across America. Even before the Great Depression, the farm plight was apparent to anyone who looked behind the façade of prosperity that seemed so widespread in the Roaring Twenties. While free-spending urbanites gloried in the wealth of consumer goods pouring out of American factories during the Flapper Age, Emmett Bench farmers and orchardists hunkered down to meet the hard times ahead.



Labor and Love in the Pacific Northwest, 1918–1935

Farm families after World War I faced two relentless challenges. The first was economic dislocation, a consequence of declining prices for farm products coupled with rising costs for farm implements, supplies, labor, and land. This double blow to the pocketbook especially hurt small farmers, who lacked the financial resources to wait for better times or expand their holdings and specialize in more lucrative crops. The second challenge was more insidious and ultimately more devastating to farm life and rural values. Despite a backlash from the older generation in the rural heartland, the lure of urban-industrial culture proved irresistible to youthful farmers and their families. As Henry Wallace, later secretary of agriculture under Franklin D. Roosevelt, wrote in 1925:

It is sad but true that we have failed as yet to build up a farm community civilization which offers as many satisfactions as present-day city civilization.... The unattractiveness of the farm is largely because of the long hours of hard work, the lack of household conveniences, poor schools and churches, and unsatisfactory amusements. Farmers have not tried to make a living on the farm really worth while.¹

For nearly two centuries American cities provided an urban safety valve for marginal farm workers, with unsettling consequences in good times and bad. Herbert Croly's 1909 observation on America's past proved remarkably prescient: "In every period of prosperity the tendency is for agricultural laborers to rush off to the towns and cities for the sake of the larger wages and the less monotonous life; and when a period of depression follows, their competition lowers the standard of living in all organized trades."² In the 1920s and '30s not only farmhands but also farm families joined the exodus, with predictable results. After learning about urban life in school, reading about it in the penny press, listening to its sounds on new-fangled radios, and watching its astonishing movie manifestations, hundreds of thousands of young rural Americans headed for town, leaving the old folks to carry on a lifestyle no longer profitable or fashionable. Farm abandonment and consolidation accelerated as never before, but prosperity remained elusive for the newcomers to the cities until World War II drove up the demand for labor in both urban and rural America.

While the farm exodus marked a general trend, how individuals coped with the effects of this rural double-whammy varied from family to family. "Big" farmers, those with large land holdings and political leverage, generally kept afloat in rough economic seas, though not without significant loss. "Little" farmers—politically powerless and mortgaged to the hilt—suffered the most. Some poor families divided along generational lines, with the elders staying behind while the children left to find better jobs elsewhere. Others tried to keep family bonds intact physically as well as spiritually, moving as a unit and living together in the city until they could afford to separate. Still others held on to marginal farms, hoping against hope that times would soon get better, all the while falling deeper into debt until they were forced out by foreclosure. Whatever the variations, the common rural theme in the twenties and early thirties remained: how to beat the hard times.

Wherever they lived, in town or country, Americans in the twenties faced a "revolution in manners and morals," in the words of a contemporary historian.³ Bedazzled by mass marketing techniques for new consumer goods in seemingly endless varieties; intrigued but

also confused by popular accounts of repressed human sexual desires and other Freudian “findings”; surrounded and sometimes assaulted by new sights and sounds from movies, radio, tabloids, and popular magazines, younger generations especially felt the pull of new ideas and values. Their responses ran the gamut of human emotions. Some experimented openly and defiantly with cigarettes, alcohol, and sex, rejecting older codes considered “Victorian” or “Puritan.” Others flatly rejected the novelties in dress, dance, dating, and other forms of personal expression that characterized the “Flapper Age.” Where they stood on moral questions of the day depended on how they saw themselves in relation to their parents, teachers, ministers, and peers. In short, they were products of their political culture, just as individuals are today regardless of race, class, creed, or nationality.

Looking for Better Opportunities in the 1920s

In the Pacific Northwest, the Limbaughs and Mortimores typified the experiences of rural families in the years between the two world wars. Nine of John W. Limbaugh’s ten children had migrated westward from southeast Missouri at the start of the 20th century. By 1920 five sons and a daughter were living on farms in southwest Idaho. The year before, the eldest of these six, Andra, purchased an apple orchard near Fruitland with the proceeds from the sale of a homestead in central Oregon. It was a fortunate choice. In the twenties Idaho apples sold well in eastern cities, and the crops were huge, with some trees producing twenty to thirty boxes apiece. While prune and cherry prices fell, apple prices held steady until the Great Depression.⁴ For a decade Andra prospered, expanding his holdings, adding a packing shed and other improvements, and building a reputation as one of the area’s solid citizens.

Andra’s Idaho siblings were not so lucky. On the Emmett Bench, his younger brother Pony’s period of affluence during World War I ended all too briefly with rising inflation and declining farm prices after the war. Buried in debt and bankrupt, in 1924 he and his family moved to Oregon for a fresh start. Their sister Virgie and her husband, Henry Schoening, kept afloat by diversifying. Pulling his apple orchard, Hen-



Figure 51 Apple Pickers

In 1919 Imandra V. “Andra” Limbaugh purchased a young apple orchard near Fruitland with the proceeds from the sale of his homestead in central Oregon. It was a fortunate choice. In the mid-twenties Idaho apples sold well in eastern cities, and the crops were huge, with some trees producing 30-50 boxes apiece. Here he is, the tallest man in the picture, beside his wife Daisy, with Henry Evans and his sister Lou on the right. The two men at left are hired neighbors.

ry turned to more predictable cash crops like corn and alfalfa and expanded his road-grading business. Elzia, next to the youngest of John W.’s sons, gave up farming altogether after divorcing his first wife and moved to Salem, Oregon, to find a job in the paper mills.

Two other sons of John W. Limbaugh joined the exodus from the Emmett Bench in the early twenties. Since his arrival in 1911 with his wife, Minnie, Bennett had worked, first as farm hand and then foreman, for the Van Deusen brothers, who owned extensive farmland and pasturage north and west of Emmett. But Minnie’s asthma grew progressively worse in the hayfields along Bissell Creek. In 1919 they left the Van Deusens and came to town. By 1920 Bennett and a friend from the Bench, Bill Burdell, had opened a harness shop, but the automobile age was fast gathering momentum and the harness business could not keep up with the times. In the meantime, Bennett’s unmarried brother Hadley, the youngest of John W.’s ten children, had been cut adrift by Bennett’s change from farmer to merchant.

Ever since he had gone back to work after his long bout with polio in 1910–11, “Hat” had lived in Bennett’s household and had labored with his elder brother in the Van Deusen fields. When Bennett decided to leave farming, Hat faced a reality check. He was twenty-six, single, a fieldhand with a bum leg, a crooked back, and few options. Times were bad, especially for farmers trying to get started with a place of their own. For a time he thought about homesteading a place above the canal near Bissell Creek, and may have actually started the process of staking a claim, but he soon gave that up. He was still at loose ends in 1921 when Bennett ran out of money trying to keep his harness business going. Whether Hat helped make the decision or just followed in his brother’s wake is not clear, but that fall the two men, with Minnie and her two young sons, ended their Idaho sojourn. After a brief trip to Wenatchee, Washington, to earn some quick cash by picking apples, they drove to the booming Weyerhaeuser lumber mill in Everett and landed jobs on the green chain, sorting lumber as it slid off the saw.

Millwork paid well but took its toll on the hands, legs, and back, not to mention ears and lungs. For two years the brothers sweated and coughed, piling heavy lumber and cleaning equipment to the sounds and smells of whining machinery, piles of sawdust, and billowing clouds of smoke from the furnaces and stacks. After building a grubstake, any excuse to leave was good enough. Meeting “some folks who wanted us to go with them to Newberg,” Minnie told me many years later,⁵ Bennett left the mills of Washington for the forests of western Oregon. He found work first as a lumberjack, then as a fieldhand for an absentee orchard owner who had 100 acres of mixed fruit. By year’s end Bennett had signed a lease to operate the orchards, and he invited his younger brother to join him in a partnership. Happier farming than milling, Hat bought a new Studebaker with his earnings and came without hesitation.

While John W. Limbaugh’s sons and daughters spread widely throughout the Pacific Northwest looking for better opportunities, the children of Edward and Martha Mortimore stayed in Oregon. Both for older and younger generations, religion played an important role in defining Mortimore lifestyles. A ruddy-faced cowboy in his youth,



Figure 52 The Batchelor

After Bennett moved to town in 1919, Hadley was a twenty-six-year-old bachelor at loose ends, but photos from those years suggest he had fun when the opportunity arose. Here he is (sitting on log at right front) with a logging crew having a beer in the timberlands above the Payette River.

later a harness-maker and road-grader by trade, Edward was also an ordained minister. His license was handy when friends and relatives wanted to get married, and occasionally he served both Free Methodist and Nazarene country churches as substitute preacher. His abiding faith and unflappable equanimity balanced the manic disposition of his devoted wife Martha, whose emotional instability to a considerable degree could be traced back to horrid childhood memories in dark Kansas root cellars while terrible storms raged overhead. “Daddy” Mortimore found ways to gloss over problems, big or small. If the groceries ran short or the taxes were due and the cookie jar had no cash, he knew “God would provide.” If she burnt the toast, he said he liked it that way.

Martha had her happy moments, but the turbulent twenties drew her ever closer to God. Her religiosity was manifest in her mealtime devotionals, her twice- or thrice-weekly church attendance, her frequent homilies to family and friends, and her compulsive Bible studies. She spent hours pouring over scripture, underlining, memorizing, and taking notes for further study. A product of fundamental Calvinist faith in the Priesthood of All Believers, she knew more Biblical passages by heart than most preachers, and frequently challenged those whose sermons deviated from what she felt was true Christian orthodoxy. Her Bible is a research document, filled with a half-century of holograph inscriptions, underlinings, dates, and sermon notes. To Edward’s “God will provide,” she added “if His children abide.” Her own children she constantly admonished to be good Christians, lest they suffer the fate she underscored with red ink in the 9th Psalm: “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.”

The Mortimore offspring responded in different ways to these parental outpourings of “holiness.” Changing times secularized the nation’s youth and lessened the influence of religious tradition. It also focused more attention on cities and material progress. By the early twenties the two sons of Edward and Martha had left their rural roots and seemed well on the road to urban middle-class success. Merton, the eldest, married and already a father of two, carried mail for the U.S. Post Office on a hilly route in downtown Portland. His brother Paul was preaching and singing in eastern Oregon after being ordained by a Christian minister at Heppner. Dedicated to church work, he was also tired of the bachelor life after nearly five years on the road, first on the Chautauqua circuit, then as assistant to an itinerant evangelist, and finally on his own as “Evangelistic Singer & Song Leader.”⁶ In January 1923, at a tiny rural church in Lexington he spotted a hazel-eyed beauty named Huldah. It was love at first sight, but he was a traveling preacher and she was a young teacher at a one-room schoolhouse nearby. Fortunately his parents were at Hermiston, not far away, so he had good reason to frequent the area. Within a year Paul and Huldah were betrothed, but they waited until he had a home pulpit before tying the knot.

The two Mortimore sisters were less certain of the prospects ahead, either economically or romantically. Olive, at age thirty-three already fourteen years into a teaching career, had to decide whether to become a student again or choose a new profession. Prior to 1922 she had needed only to pass a general qualifying exam and secure a contract from a local school board to take charge of a classroom. But after school was out that spring at Adams, where she taught the elementary grades, officials from the State Board of Education informed her that she needed professional coursework and a state credential if she wanted to continue teaching. What to do? She had some savings, but at that time the nearest in-state teacher’s training program was 250 miles away, at Oregon Normal School (now Western Oregon College) in Monmouth, fifteen miles southwest of Salem. Leaving eastern Oregon meant leaving her parents, her siblings, and most of her friends.

Two friends and fellow teachers were, however, in the same boat. Oa Calkins had recently married Will West in the Mortimore backyard, with Olive's father officiating. The West home in Adams was large enough to board Olive and another teacher-friend, Grace Du-bois, a divorcee with a child in school. Grace also needed more training to meet tougher state standards, but apparently was able to defer the mandatory upgrade for another year or two. Oa and Olive decided to attend Monmouth that fall. The decision made, Olive then turned it into an opportunity to help her younger sister, Evelyn.

After graduating from Pendleton High School in 1921 the month before she turned eighteen, Evelyn had toyed with a nursing career and had spent a few months in nurse's training at Northwest Nazarene College in Idaho. While Olive was at Adams pondering the future, her sister was living with her parents on a rented farm in Hermiston. The meager earnings she made as a practical nurse helping a rural doctor deliver babies were not even enough to keep her in clothes. A letter to her mother, Martha, written early in 1922 reveals her plight. Martha was at The Dalles, visiting relatives, and wanted her daughter to join her. Penury was the main theme in Evelyn's frivolous response: "I would have been delighted to go to The Dalles, mumsy dear, but I had neither money or—anything else at present.... I can't hardly see how I could go to The Dalles as I'm in need of \$25 pretty badly myself and I want to try and get some more nursing to do and pay off the mortgage on my coat."⁷ Martha's reply was not saved, but she may have countered with an admonition from Ecclesiastes—which she underlined in her Bible later that year: "For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence: but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it."

Martha's educational emphasis was not out of character, for despite her rustic trappings she recognized the importance of learning. Calvinist theology required a cultivated intellect not only to understand the Bible but also for ultimate success in life. That may be what inspired Martha to take in a preschool child her destitute parents could not afford to keep. With her own children grown, she had room at Hermiston to help raise "little Ruby," a sweet-natured toddler with a

delightful lisp who stayed until the Mortimores moved in 1927. At a summer picnic her fondness for fresh fruit earned her the nickname “Watermelon Wuby.”

The Monmouth Years

Learning for life was also a timely message for Evelyn. When Olive appeared that summer, offering to pay her sister’s room and board so they could both enroll and live together at Monmouth, Evelyn jumped at the chance. That fall the two new freshmen matriculated at Oregon Normal.

Even though Olive had never attended high school, she passed the college entrance exams with flying colors. Pious and deliberative in contrast to her impetuous sister, in two years she completed all the required coursework, earning both a college diploma and a lifetime Oregon teaching certificate. Along the way she also gained a soul mate, equally studious and devout, a graduate of Willamette University the same year that Olive graduated from Monmouth. Years later Evelyn said that she had first met John Franklin Rodman on a casual date, and then had introduced him to Olive, but other family members dispute that claim. Since he attended the same Nazarene Church Olive went to while she was at Oregon Normal, it seems likely that they were destined to meet regardless of any third-party help. Whatever the introductory circumstances, romance bloomed quickly. By the spring of 1923 John and Olive were engaged, but the news leaked out prematurely. Embarrassed, John wrote an apologetic letter to her father. They had “intended to talk personally” to her parents prior to the announced betrothal, but the school board in Adams leaked the news after they had told the district of their plans to seek teaching positions after graduation. He concluded with an affirmation of faith and commitment that must have assuaged his prospective in-laws:

I love your daughter. We have endeavored not to be in a hurry in this matter and have taken time to pray over the matter and feel assured that it is Gods will that we should be one.⁸

Two months later Edward conducted the marriage ceremony for Olive and John at Laurelhurst Park in Portland, 17 June 1923.

In contrast to her sister's more conventional career, Evelyn's coursework was interrupted two months into her first term at Monmouth. Oregon Normal emphasized fieldwork as an essential part of the teaching curriculum. One day the college president, J. S. Landers, a family acquaintance from Pendleton, called her into his office and said, "I have a teaching job for you, and I know you can handle it." The job was at the State School for Girls at Salem, a penal institution. Evelyn was husky and healthy and had been a dorm proctor at Northwest Nazarene College and a practical nurse in eastern Oregon, but handling wayward girls was something new. However, the job paid well, was only temporary, and she was, after all, living off her sister's welfare. She could thus earn credits, gain teaching experience, and return in a few months with money in her pocket. She accepted with alacrity—a gutsy decision for a teenager.

After a couple of months living and working inside a correctional institution, Evelyn thought she could handle just about anything. She taught everything from arithmetic to music to reading, mostly to delinquent and abandoned children, some nearly as old and as big as she. Though still untrained in teaching methods or disciplinary procedures, Evelyn had a natural talent for command, and prison discipline was crude by modern standards. Her mettle was tested one morning when the warden asked her to put a straight jacket on "Teddy," a tall and obstreperous new inmate who "had knocked two policemen down on the front porch as they brought her in." As Evelyn described her years later, Teddy swore like a sailor and "snarled like a dog." She had been "picked up off the rails" and fought off all attempts to restrain her. After a quick lesson in how to use the jacket, Evelyn unlocked the door to Teddy's cell and marched in. Teddy was defiant at first but offered little physical resistance, and Evelyn proceeded to jacket and tie her to the bedpost. After a few hours Teddy's resistance had weakened considerably, and sometime later she was released on a promise to cooperate. Within a few days, Evelyn had the newcomer in class and was giving her piano lessons.⁹

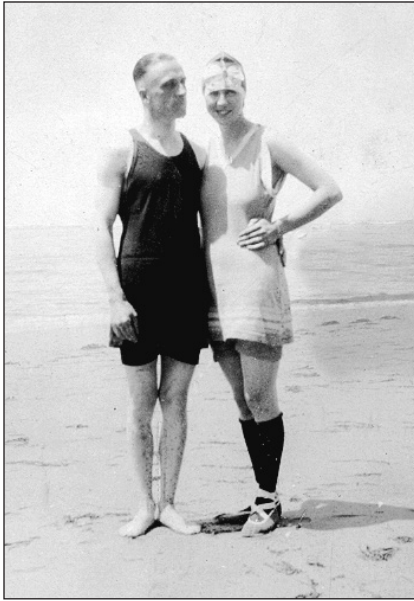


Figure 53 Evelyn Mortimore and C. J. Davis

In 1923 Evelyn finished her freshman year at Oregon Normal School (now Western Oregon College) in Monmouth, but lacked the money to continue. That fall she landed a teaching job at Hermiston in eastern Oregon. Soon she was flirting with the school principal, C. J. Davis, a bachelor twice her age but seemingly stimulated by the attention.

Evelyn returned to Monmouth in the spring of 1923 to complete her freshman year. That fall, with her sister married and no longer able to help her financially, she found a job teaching first grade at Hermiston, near her parents' home. For a time she also thought of wedding bells after falling in love with the principal, C. J. Davis. A stolid bachelor, he was older and more mature—but evidently vulnerable to the flirtations of a twenty-year-old employee. They were frequent companions over the next year, teasing and perhaps testing each other as potential life partners. It was something of a father-child match, as his pompous note on the back of a picture of her sitting on a driftwood log suggests:

You look like a real girl perched on this old “once giant of the forest” now stranded on the shores of time. This will help recall to your mind the famous “Netarts Beach” and is close by the clam beds and where you took so much interest in “jumping the breakers.” I was almost afraid you would drown by venturing so far in that browny deep but I would have rescued you—so no danger after all.¹⁰

By the end of 1924 it was all over, but they parted as friends.

Still needing money, and perhaps a fresh perspective as well, in the spring of 1924 Evelyn took a position teaching third grade at Ione, a rural community thirty-six miles southwest of Hermiston. She moved in with her brother Paul, who had just accepted his first pastorate with the small Christian congregation there. Evelyn was glad to share expenses and take the extra bedroom in the house he had rented. However convenient the arrangement, it did not please Paul's bride-to-be. A small-town girl from eastern Oregon, Huldah was not prepared for the competition she felt around other women. Whenever she visited Paul, she went straight to his room and shut the door, whether he was there or not. Sulking behind closed doors was symptomatic of things to come.

Later, as Paul's career brought him into contact with women of all ages, Huldah grew intensely jealous, making home life miserable for her husband. But in their courting years, Huldah's striking good looks swept Paul off his feet. He teased his mother about ending his bachelorhood. "Don't you think its about time I was getting some one to wash dishes for me?" he wrote.¹¹ They were married in 1925, after he had landed a pastorate in the Willamette Valley at Gladstone, just ten miles south of Portland.

Evelyn's year off from college ended in the fall of 1924. Having earned enough money to resume her teacher's training at Oregon Normal, she returned to Monmouth for a semester, but by the spring of 1925 was back at Ione as third grade teacher and director of music for the lower grades. These swings back and forth between student and teacher helped balance her checkbook but slowed progress toward a degree and a regular teaching credential.

Overland in a Model T

Before school ended that spring, Grace Dubois, Olive's friend and co-teacher at Adams, offered Evelyn a chance to secure more credits and enjoy a trip at the same time. After delaying for a couple of years, Grace eventually had been forced back to school by the same new laws that brought Olive and Evelyn to Monmouth. A few years older than Evelyn, and with a seven-year-old daughter, Genevieve, Grace wanted

her young Mortimore friend to help drive to Kearney, Nebraska, near Grace's home town and the Nebraska state teacher's college.

For Evelyn, who had never been far from home, it was a memorable adventure that she recorded with a portable typewriter each night in camp. Grace had a new automobile she named "Henryette," a Model T touring car with open windows and a cloth top. Grace and Evelyn rode in front, with Genevieve in the rear seat. A luggage rack held a trunk and spare tires, with toolbox, tent, and other impedimenta tied to the running boards. Extra travel gear was essential for long trips in the twenties. Oregon had led the nation in 1919 by taxing gasoline as a means to fund road improvements, and the federal government in 1921 passed legislation offering matching grants to states for highway construction along major arteries.¹² One example was the Lincoln Highway, America's first cross-country all-weather route. In the West, it followed the Oregon Trail eastward from Portland to Omaha. Evelyn's father had graded parts of it through Umatilla County, and the three travelers naturally followed it as much as possible. But even the best overland routes challenged the Tin Lizzies of that day. Asphalt and concrete pavement usually ended at the city limits; the open road, if improved, was graded and graveled or "macadamized." Through the remote sagebrush prairies and mountains, even the Lincoln Highway sometimes narrowed to a dirt path.

The trip began as a two-car caravan at Pendleton on a bright Tuesday morning late in May. The Dennises, a local couple traveling across country in a Star touring car, drove in tandem with the Model T. As the motorists climbed the slow grade up Cabbage Hill they enjoyed the panorama of bright green wheat that stretched for miles across Umatilla County. At the top Grace "stepped on the gas" in the bracing mountain air "until we kept an even pace of nearly 25 miles an hour," Evelyn exclaimed that night. At Baker, their first gas stop, they added "8 gal. of PEP and gave the smiling gentleman 25¢ per," then drove on through a hot afternoon to reach Fruitland, Idaho, and overnight with relatives.

Driving east the next day, Evelyn was awed by the irrigated fields along the middle Snake River. "We always thot that Umatilla county had the world by the tail but—Oh dear, as we looked and looked and

looked, we couldn't see the end of a vast country all under cultivation." They camped in a grassy field at Twin Falls that evening after paying the proprietor 50 cents, and had to string the tent to a flimsy post because they had left the poles behind. After supper they walked twelve blocks to town to see the sights and returned "plenty tired." The tourists slept soundly that night.

It took another day and a half to cross eastern Idaho. Racing storm clouds into Lava Hot Springs, they were tempted to try the hot waters of a local natatorium, but Grace was intimidated by the stares of "all the men" in town. Approaching Wyoming the following day, they followed a guidebook out of Montpelier that "said turn to the left ascending steep grade." It was too much for the Model T, as Evelyn reported:

About one puff and Henryette was done. By everyone pushing I was able to get her to the top of the hill. Grace walked most of the way up the two mile grade and was sure winded.

They pulled into Opal, Wyoming, that night, tired but exhilarated by a beautiful sunset on the high plateau. While Grace made supper, Evelyn "fixed the first puncture" of the trip, typed up her daily log, and "hit the hay" by 9 p.m.

Touring across the windy hills of Wyoming over the next three days, the travelers marveled at the "high palisades" along Green River, the "gorgeous" water cuts through rocks "of every color imaginable," the "many deserted mines" in the coal country around Rock Springs, and the "beautiful" stone houses in Parco, the new company town filled with "Oil Producers and Refiners." Their friends the Dennises had "two punctures" one afternoon, but that hardly slowed the expedition. On Saturday night they camped on the banks of the North Platte, consumed the river water with gusto, and bathed "in a spoon" just before bedtime. At Laramie a hailstorm came rolling up just after they had set up the tent in a campground next to rental cottages. Afraid it would cause havoc in camp, they grabbed as much as they could carry and ran for an empty cottage just as the storm hit. "It hailed like sixty-six," wrote Evelyn, but blew over in thirty minutes.

Figure 54 On the Road

In 1925 Evelyn and two friends drove overland from Pendleton to Kearney, Nebraska, to attend summer school at a teacher's college. They journeyed in an open Model T with a cloth top that gave little protection from the elements, over roads that at best were graded and graveled—and sometimes a dirt path.

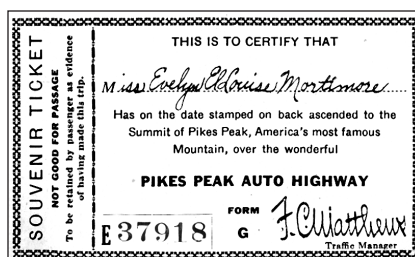


Next morning, after a mechanic relined the Ford's transmission at a local garage while the travelers patiently waited, the car was so "tight" they had to take the long grade toward Cheyenne in low gear at 12 miles per hour. They passed the state capital that afternoon, crossed into Nebraska, and made camp late that night at Sidney, but the wind was so cold and the air so gritty that Grace and her daughter slept in the car. Evelyn put up the tent anyway, but woke up next morning "Dirty for the first time on the trip," with a face looking like she "had been exploring a coal mine." After parting company with the Dennises, who were traveling on eastward, Grace and Evelyn "spotted a beauty parlor and there was no question as to how badly we were in need of one." They relished the time and money spent getting their hair shampooed and marcelled and eating lunch "at a real Cafe." Polished and ready for company, they drove on to Amherst, Colorado, across the state line a few miles southwest of Sidney, completing the eight-day, 1,250-mile journey at the home of Grace's sister "with a lovely chicken dinner and a good soft bed."¹³

Refreshed and ready for summer school, the two teachers spent three months at Nebraska State Teacher's College in Kearney. Along with coursework, Evelyn managed to find plenty of distractions. She took a bit part in a school comedy, played bass violin in the college orchestra, toured and picnicked with Grace's circle of friends and relatives, and livened up many parties, as one entry by Grace's brother-in-law in Evelyn's scrapbook indicates: "in memory of the music, and songs, and jollity provoked by a bubbling disposition. D.A. Sawyer." Late in August, at the close of the last session, the travelers, now a trio

Figure 55 Pike's Peak Stub

On the return trip from Nebraska to Oregon, Evelyn and her friends followed a tourist route through Colorado and Utah, then north to the Lincoln Highway. The Model T proved equal to the task, even making it to the top of Pike's Peak without incident.



that included Grace's uncle, Harry Thurston, left for home. Taking advantage of the fine summer weather, they followed a tourist route through Denver, Colorado Springs, Royal Gorge, Grand Junction, and Monarch Pass into Utah, then north to the Lincoln Highway for the return to Oregon. The Model T proved equal to the task, even making it to the top of Pike's Peak without incident. Tires failed frequently—one blowout upon entering Denver, wrote Evelyn, was “so loud that people for a block jumped three feet into the air, so I heard.” But they were seasoned travelers by then, and tire problems were “nothing in our young lives any more.” They were home in ten days, and back to work soon after.

A New Teacher in Oregon

Evelyn finished her required coursework during the fall of 1925 at Oregon Normal and graduated in December with a diploma and a teaching certificate. That was good enough for the regular classroom, but was it sufficient for college teaching? President Landers thought so, at least for the spring semester, and his confidence rubbed off on his new graduate. Before she left for the holidays, she agreed to return as instructor in music education.

During the 1926 spring term at Monmouth she taught music methods and appreciation courses to four large classes of adult teachers on campus. She also supervised student teachers, traveling once or twice weekly to various rural schools in the area. In the words of an Oregon Normal official, student teachers conducted classes at training centers under the supervision of a “critic who has had experience in the rural communities and knows what is required in that line of work.”¹⁴ One of those rural schools was the Children's Farm Home, an orphanage

near Corvallis operated by the Women's Christian Temperance Union. The WCTU funded the building construction but not all the operational costs. Students were required to work as well as attend school. A large garden plot provided fresh vegetables and seasonal fruit, and a variety of domestic animals supplied the protein. Students lived in dormitories and had daily chores as well as fund-raising projects. The project for 1924 was to buy a third cow to add to the herd. They bought it one piece at a time, starting with the tail. To raise the money they staged live theater performances, held concerts and pageants, and sold handcrafted decorative items. Presumably the cow purchase was over by the time Evelyn arrived in 1926, but money still needed to be raised. On top of her other work that spring, she directed the Farm Home students in a performance of "Pandora," a Greek operetta she had staged with other students a year earlier at Ione.

Living in faculty housing at ONS was less expensive than living off campus, but during that spring term Evelyn found a way to cut expenses even more. Her "cousin" Ouida Limbaugh—actually only distantly related by marriage—was enrolled at Oregon State in Corvallis, but was evidently unhappy living on campus. Sharing an apartment with Evelyn in Monmouth seemed a logical move, even if it meant driving thirty miles to Corvallis and back each day. Eventually Ouida gave up the daily commute and transferred into ONS's teaching program.

Rooming with Ouida brought Evelyn into the Limbaugh family network. She already knew some Limbaughs in central Oregon and Idaho, but Ouida introduced her to many more. The two young women often stopped at the home of Joe and Elora Reynolds in Salem when they were in town. Without children of their own, the Reynolds welcomed visitors. It was well they did. Living there also was the family patriarch, John W. Limbaugh, the seventy-six-year-old father of "Loy" and her nine siblings. He had moved in with the Reynoldses after divorcing his second wife a few years earlier. Diabetes had slowed him down a bit, but he still traveled widely to visit friends and relatives and they reciprocated when he was at home. The Reynolds household often buzzed with company, including Evelyn, who came to know them all—at least, that's what she thought.

She found out differently in the late spring of 1926, when the cherries were ripe and the hills vibrant with fresh greenery. There was a family gathering in Newberg, where two Limbaugh brothers operated an orchard. Ouida heard the news and said to her “cousin Mort”: “I’ve got a man for you; you ought to meet my uncle.” “Well,” Evelyn replied, “which uncle haven’t I met?” To find out, they drove north in Evelyn’s Model T coupé. Minnie greeted them as they drove up to the farmhouse surrounded by fruit trees and pointed the way to a man picking cherries at the top of a ladder. “Mort, meet Uncle Hat,” said Ouida. He climbed down to greet them, a handsome, dark-haired young man, limping slightly but standing tall. “The effects of his polio were hardly noticeable in those days,” reminisced Evelyn much later. At the time she didn’t think of him as a potential mate—after all, he was just a farmer, while she was a rising career professional. Over the next several years Hat was just one of many Limbaughs she knew and occasionally visited with Ouida and other family members.

Despite her experience and responsibilities at Monmouth, Evelyn still lacked the credentials necessary for a regular faculty position. Upward mobility turned out to be a progressive spiral with work and education intertwined. By term’s end that spring she had saved enough money to finance another round of training. The next academic stop for her was the University of Oregon.

Grandpa Peck Finds a Travel Companion

During the summer break before starting classes in Eugene, Evelyn relaxed with a trip to Idaho with another relative, William Hubbard Peck, whom everyone called “Grandpa.” The Pecks and Mortimores had been intertwined ever since 1902, when the Mortimores, Tuckers, Limbaughs, Evanses, and Cowards—all related families—converged in central Oregon, where Grandpa Peck and his wife Mary had homesteaded in 1880.¹⁵ For more than forty years the Pecks and their seven children had helped develop the Crooked River country, and were well-known if not always well-liked. Mary died in 1925, leaving her seventy-two-year-old husband a lonely widower with a sizable estate and brand-new car. As almost anyone with siblings can testify, inheritance



Figure 56 Grandpa Peck

An elderly widower with a new car, William Hubbard Peck enjoyed the company of Evelyn Mortimore, the young niece of his son's wife who in 1925 was working on a teaching credential at Oregon Normal in Monmouth.

is the Achilles' heel of large families. Add to the mix an unattached and flirtatious young lady who loved to drive, and the result was a smoldering family controversy that took years to cool.

Unknown to the Pecks, Evelyn's mother, Martha, unintentionally may have started the trouble. She took pity on Grandpa Peck. Soon after his wife's death, he hit the road, driving around in his big Chrysler visiting all his relatives. To Martha he seemed lonely and forlorn when he arrived in Hermiston, and she encouraged him to drive over to Monmouth and give Evelyn a ride. She needed a break from school and loved riding around in big cars, especially if she was at the wheel. He showed up one day at her door, and she jumped in. Soon she was driving, and Grandpa Peck found he enjoyed her company. After that, when he wanted to take a trip, he often drove over to Evelyn's if she was available, handed her the keys, and off they rode.

This happy traveling companionship seemed entirely innocent to the two principals. But it did not sit well with Grandpa Peck's children. Evelyn found that out during the summer trip in 1926. She and her elderly travel mate took ten days driving to Idaho via Portland, Eugene, Bend, and Culver. They arrived at his son John's home at Fruitland in time for a Fourth of July family gathering. One evening Evelyn overheard Grandpa's children talking about her in the next room. "Dad just carries her around everyplace," one of his daughters said in a huff, "and just lets her drive that car! I don't know what he's thinking about, but she doesn't need to come over here!" Evelyn told me later that she

usually did what she pleased and didn't care what others thought, but this was doubtless a defensive reaction. When she talked to her mother about the incident, Martha scoffed. "Don't pay any attention to it!" she advised.¹⁶ They both thought the Peck heirs were making mountains out of molehills.

Evidently Grandpa Peck thought so, too. He continued to invite Evelyn along on his travels. However, to avoid making a scene, he didn't tell his children, and neither did Evelyn. One trip in 1928 took them all the way to Vancouver, B.C. They spent a week on the road, like two kids eager to see the sights. On the return she drove him through the Methow country where she had spent a happy year as a teenager, visiting old friends she hadn't seen in more than a decade. He seemed to enjoy the visit as much as she. Only her mother knew where they were, and she seemed uncharacteristically confident that her daughter was in good hands. Perhaps Martha was comforted by a passage in Isaiah she had recently underscored: "God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed..."

Martha's confidence in Evelyn's common sense seems justified in hindsight. Never was there a hint of unseemliness in her travels with Grandpa Peck. The issue that most upset his children was not morality but money. Grandpa apparently was too loose with his pocketbook around Evelyn. As will be seen, the money issue carried on for years before it was resolved.

If Grandpa Peck was good for an occasional trip and a few gifts, for romance Evelyn sought men her own age. While at the University of Oregon she dated a loose-jointed watch repairman from Oregon City, who entertained friends with contortionist tricks, like standing on one leg with the other wrapped around his head. Evelyn's album has two pictures of him in that pose, but not much else. After she left Eugene she didn't see much more of him.

Young and Single with a Job

Evelyn spent a year at Eugene upgrading her music skills. In addition to piano, voice, and violin lessons, she studied music theory and prac-

tice, teaching methods, even fundamentals of opera and first-year Italian. She also joined the university orchestra as bass violinist and loved traveling by train with the group on its 1927 spring tour. A surviving scrapbook is decorated with photos and clips of theaters, menus, anecdotes, and other mementoes she collected at Grants Pass, Medford, Ashland, and other stops.

Though she enjoyed university life, her pocketbook was empty when the term ended. The old education-work cycle took another turn. She still had faculty status with Oregon Normal and expected to return to Corvallis. But President Landers had other plans for her. Before she left Eugene he called to offer her a position as administrator at a new summer school branch ONS was opening in La Grande. She was versatile enough to accept whatever he offered, but a health problem delayed her departure eastward. During the spring she had been ill several times with sinus trouble. A local doctor sent her to a Portland specialist, who decided she needed a septum-scraping procedure now controversial but then much in vogue. As one recent medical scholar remarked,

as the twentieth century began, there was a surge of technology that allowed a marked increase in the type and number of surgeries performed. Unfortunately, nasal and sinus surgery holds the awesome potential to promote health or to severely hurt someone.¹⁷

Evelyn's sinuses improved in the long run, but gradually the bridge of her nose flattened—a side effect common to patients having the same procedure. Had plastic surgery been as advanced then as it is today, she would have been a good candidate for a “nose job.” But in the summer of 1927 the problem was not cosmetics but complications following surgery. She needed rest, but she left on the train for La Grande only a few days after the operation. The ride in a passenger coach was sheer hell, she told me years later. She was nauseous and nearly delirious by the time they reached Pendleton, but then settled down and reached La Grande feeling a bit better. After treatment the



Figure 57 Evelyn the Teacher

As music critic for Oregon Normal School, Evelyn supervised student teachers and taught music education for two years in the late 1920s at Children's Farm Home in Corvallis. With a good income for the first time in her life, she tried to make herself attractive. This portrait from the period shows that the effort was not very successful. She had several male friends and often double-dated with her cousin Ouida, but a lasting male relationship seemed elusive until she met one of Ouida's uncles in a cherry tree.

next day by a local doctor she went to work at the ONS facility with a headache that grew progressively worse. Her sinuses were inflamed, and the infection had migrated to her inner ear. She stood it for three days, then called President Landers and told him she was too sick to continue. With no family or friends nearby—her parents had moved from Hermiston by that time—for help she turned to Ouida, who was home in Fruitland for the summer. She drove over, took Evelyn back to Idaho, and put her to bed. There she stayed for the next six weeks.

By the time school began in the fall of 1927, Evelyn had fully recovered and was ready to go back to work. President Landers this time sent her back to the Children's Farm Home as full-time critic teacher. She supervised ONS student teachers that came to Corvallis, and instructed Farm Home children in music education, home economics, and other courses. Whether this represented a step down from her previous job on the ONS campus is not clear, but she welcomed the \$200 per month salary and benefits, including housing. With the cooperation of school officials and the WCTU, she had an apartment built in the basement of the big, roomy main building, next to a large classroom where she taught sewing and other household skills. It was large enough to accommodate her cousin and former roommate, Ouida, still at Monmouth finishing up her teaching credential. She moved in and for the rest of the term commuted to Monmouth.

Only a year apart in age and with similar rural backgrounds, Evelyn and Ouida made good roommates. They also shared a common interest in men. For their day, both women were past the average age of marriage.¹⁸ Ouida was going with a University of Oregon student who owned a car dealership and had an unattached friend, a chicken farmer who taught in the university's department of agriculture and later headed Oregon's poultry industry. Soon two young men were regular visitors to the Farm Home, riding in a new Chrysler convertible that could "drive 50 miles an hour," Evelyn exclaimed much later. She insisted that the boys "neither smoked nor drank," but that didn't stop the foursome from enjoying a robust social life in the Flapper Age.

Friends and relatives were frequent visitors while the two women lived together. When Farm Home officials advertised for bids to repaint all the buildings on campus, Evelyn alerted Joe Reynolds, in those days a Salem house painter. He submitted the winning bid and stayed with Evelyn and Ouida while he completed the job. His wife Loy and her father drove over from Salem regularly, and occasionally other Limbaughs and Mortimores arrived to spend a day or a weekend. Along with students coming in to take piano lessons, and Evelyn's energetic Boston terrier "Topsy" always ready to greet visitors, her apartment was a busy place that year.

Heading for Depression, Economic and Personal

One weekend in 1928 brought visitors and news from Newberg. The Newberg Orchards had fared tolerably well during the twenties, with the fresh fruit market holding up despite increasing competition from California's "weed patch" district south of Fresno. Since launching their partnership five years before, Bennett and his younger brother Hat had made enough money to want more in life than just an orchard lease. That summer they terminated the lease, sold their equipment, divided the profits, dissolved the partnership, and went their separate ways, each looking for good farmland to purchase. Bennett bought a place close to Newberg and farmed it for a few months. Then the owner of the Newberg Orchards decided to sell, and Bennett wanted it back. He negotiated a deal for cash and the farm he had just bought to sweeten the pot. Now he was a big orchard owner, just in time to face the worst depression in American history.

Bennett's younger brother ultimately suffered the same fate. After leaving Newberg, Hat lived for a few weeks with the Reynolds in Salem. He traded his Studebaker for a new Chevrolet coupé and took daily trips with his elderly father through the upper Willamette Valley looking for good farmland. One day they located a promising 200-acre dryland farm that raised grain and hay at Creswell, just south of Eugene. Previous owners had constructed a "modern" ranch house—but without indoor plumbing—as well as a huge barn and other buildings on the property. Investing all his money, and borrowing enough more to buy stock, equipment, and supplies, Hat and his father moved in—two farmer-bachelors hoping they could reap a profit from future grain sales.

Had they talked with grain dealers that year, their rosy optimism might have faded long before the 1930s. Nationally, grain prices had slipped badly from World War I figures. For instance, oat prices on the Great Plains were as high as 84 cents a bushel in 1918, compared to 59 cents in 1928, nearly a 30 percent decline. By 1930 the price was down to 38 cents.¹⁹ Wheat grown on the old Tucker homestead in Culver brought 90 cents per bushel in 1920, but only 61 cents in 1930. As the renter that year told Evelyn's mother, "Wheat growers would all be

sick if financial worries could make them so because the cost of production is more than the wheat will bring in the market.”²⁰ And this was still two years before depression prices hit bottom.

Neither Hat nor his father seemed bothered by market uncertainties for the first year or so on the Creswell farm. For the first time in his life Hat had a place of his own. Though thirty-five and still single, he had never lived alone. His father and siblings had always offered him a home—perhaps feeling sorry for his crippled condition, though he never felt sorry for himself, at least not openly. Nevertheless, as he set to work fixing up the ranch house, adding a garden, running pipes from the pump to the kitchen and bathroom, repairing fences, and preparing the fields, the lack of a domestic partner weighed heavily on him. Over the years he had had a number of lady friends, and recently had cultivated a serious relationship with a divorcee with a child from a previous marriage. He had even loaned her some money to finalize her divorce so she could marry again. But she took the money and ran, leaving him with a thinner wallet and a broken heart.

Perhaps to hide his depression, Hat welcomed company to Creswell. His brothers and sisters came regularly, and so did their families and friends. Occasionally his niece Ouida and Evelyn showed up, sometimes with boyfriends. They enjoyed helping feed the animals, riding around the place on an old clunky tractor, and cooking up a meal for the bachelors. At night they played cards—Hat’s favorite pastime. He would sit for hours playing pinochle—very fashionable in the twenties, though not as popular as bridge. After cards, the older folks got the beds, and the younger ones slept on the floor.

If Hat took special interest in Evelyn during these visits, she didn’t notice. She was still casually dating other men, including her doctor from Eugene who had been treating her sinus trouble for several years. In the fall of 1928, after Ouida moved back to Fruitland—she had found a beau, a local orchardist whom she later married—Evelyn saw more of Hat. He drove over occasionally during a lull on the farm, sometimes with Loy and Joe from Salem, at other times by himself. Playing cards or going to the movies was the usual entertainment. Sometimes they just talked. He appreciated Evelyn’s witty conversation, but he

also needed her emotional support after his unhappy experience earlier with a perfidious girlfriend. Evelyn felt sorry for him, but at the time didn't think of him romantically. She had her eyes on a bigger prize.

Evelyn's prospects suddenly improved over the 1928 Christmas holidays. Her friendly physician invited her to visit him in Los Angeles for a few days. He had recently moved from Eugene and was now practicing at a veteran's hospital. Years later she coyly glossed over the implications, but it was clear that she regarded it as a romantic interlude on the way to a marriage proposal. It was also a chance for adventure. She had never been to California, and she was earning enough to afford the trip and the "very nice" hotel accommodations he had made for her.

She boarded the train in blustery cold weather at Eugene and disembarked in "delightful summer weather" at the Los Angeles terminal, where palm trees were swaying in the breeze. For three days she marveled at the city sights, the Hollywood mystique, the orange groves blooming in December, the joy of wearing a "white Georgette pleated skirt" on Christmas Day "without a wrap." Her escort was most solicitous and considerate. Evidently he wanted to pursue the relationship, but by the time she got back to Eugene she decided "this was not the life for me." She had too many rural roots, too many close family and friends in the Pacific Northwest, to give them up for the exotic urban life in Southern California. "It was too far away from everything I had ever known," she told me many years later.²¹

Setting geographic limits on one's marital options seems provincial today, but Evelyn's decision was symptomatic of the culture wars that tore at the nation's social fabric in the Flapper Era. Rural Oregon was culturally close to rural Tennessee in 1928, where the Scopes Trial exposed the raw edges of America's struggle to reconcile fundamental religious belief with the empirical reasoning of modern science. Evelyn had briefly ventured beyond her emotional boundaries to test new ideas and values, but the alienation she felt quickly led her back to the comfort and safety of her own sheltered world.

A Surprise Wedding

Not long after her return from California, Evelyn had a chance to test the new regional reality of her life. John Hadley Limbaugh arrived one evening at her Corvallis apartment, visited a while, then left. On the way out he said, "I'm coming up next Thursday and ask you to marry me." Reminiscing many years later, she insisted that the announcement came as a complete surprise. In the three years they had known each other he had not spoken a romantic word, not hinted at his feelings for her, not even held her hand—perhaps because she had not encouraged him. But she took the news in stride. "O.K.," she told him with a laugh. "I'll cook a big dinner and you can come up and ask me to marry you." The week's reprieve gave her a chance to think. When they met again she was filled with questions, but politely deferred them until after the "big dinner." Then they sat at the table talking about the future like a married couple planning a trip. He wanted to farm more than anything else, and he asked her to accept that lot in life. She could finish up the school year, but after that she would be a housewife. "I don't have any education," he told her, "but you have," as if that balanced the equation. His only romantic gesture came after the long discussion. "I like you very much," he said, "in fact I love you." She was still dubious, telling him only that she "liked you and the Limbaughs," but "hadn't thought about getting married." All he won that evening was her promise to "think about it."

She thought about it for weeks, never telling anyone about the proposal but gathering as much information and advice as she could. One day she paid a visit to the Reynolds family in Salem, where she casually asked Loy, "How much money does Hat make on that place?" Loy said he earned a good living. Another friend she invited to go with her to "meet a guy" so they could later talk about their impressions of him. Finally, after a month or more of deliberation, she asked herself: "Why shouldn't I marry him? He's a good man, and he really needs somebody." She didn't know anything about farm work, but she was "big and strong, and could learn." But the clincher came when she received a letter from Oregon Normal School. It said that if she wanted to stay on the ONS faculty she would have to complete her degree and



Figure 58 Wedding Pictures

One evening John Hadley Limbaugh arrived at Evelyn's Corvallis apartment and surprised her with a marriage proposal. Even though she had started a teaching career, he wanted to farm more than anything else. She accepted after learning that her job was in jeopardy unless she completed her degree and upgraded her credential. They kept their plans secret and had separate wedding portraits made in advance, wrapping them as party favors to be given out at the reception.

upgrade her credential. The old earning-learning merry-go-round was about to start up again, but here was a chance to jump off. Hers was thus a pragmatic decision—as was Hat's. The notion of romantic love, so popular in the twenties, had little to do with it. These two mature adults had come together for practical reasons, with Cupid left to fend for himself.

To avoid publicity—and embarrassing questions from family and friends—they decided to keep their plans confidential, telling only Evelyn's parents, a very surprised Ouida who would serve as maid of honor, and her brother Paul, who would conduct the marriage ceremony.

Evelyn picked the date in a moment of impish brilliance. Every year the Limbaugh family gathered on 29 March to celebrate the birthday of “Grandpa” Limbaugh. In 1929 that event was only a couple of days before Easter Sunday, which the Children’s Farm Home celebrated annually by an open house and a children’s musical program. “The children had never seen a wedding,” she told Ouida, “so why don’t we give them one?”

Her invitations to family members happily lured them to a special family celebration without revealing the details. Quietly the conspirators had separate wedding portraits made in advance and wrapped as party favors, to be given out at the reception and dinner in Evelyn’s large apartment in the Farm Home basement following the ceremony. To cut costs, she made her own wedding dress in the domestic arts department as well as the maid of honor’s, and cooked a ham and an angel’s food wedding cake on her apartment stove. As music director, she told officials she thought “big white bells” would be “simply marvelous” decorations for the auditorium, where the children were to perform. The Corvallis Community Orchestra would supply the instrumental music. As their conductor, Evelyn could play whatever music she wanted. The group practiced a variety of songs for the Easter event, including Longren’s Wedding March, which she said had been “requested.” “It made no difference to her what they played,” she told them, so long as the public was pleased. She also had another “special request” for a vocalist to sing “Because.” For that performance she appealed to a fine soprano from Fruitland, Catherine Finch, the fiancé of Lawrence Limbaugh, Ouida’s brother. Evelyn wrote her that the children would just “love” to have Catherine sing it. Catherine said she’d “do anything for the children.” To get the children directly involved, Evelyn trained six little girls in a “flower drill.” They would “come in a door and drop leaves,” then go to their places around an arbor of bells.

If planning a “normal” wedding is complex, trying to pull off an elaborate “secret” wedding without a hitch is a fool’s errand if it fails, and a masterpiece of planning and precision if it succeeds. Evelyn’s affair succeeded well enough, but there were some unanticipated repercussions. The day began conventionally, following Easter services, in a packed

Farm Home auditorium filled with family, friends, patrons, and guests. Evelyn, on stage in a white dress as music director, led the school children in a program of songs and recitations. The Farm Home director then rose to introduce her to the audience, but she whispered back, "Oh, we're so busy and all, I think by the end of the program everyone will know who I am." After that came the "special requests," including "Because" and the wedding march. Evelyn conducted a few bars, then started coughing. Signaling the orchestra to keep on playing, she quickly left the podium and ran out the side door, where Ouida waited with the wedding dress. The cough was also a signal to the bridegroom, his best man (an old boyfriend of Evelyn), and her preacher-brother Paul, who walked up to the arbor to greet the little flower girls proceeding up the aisle on their "drill." Stunned faces greeted the bride as she followed Ouida and the girls up the aisle. Some were still in shock after the ceremony ended and the reception began for family members in Evelyn's apartment. Others were peeved that they had been left in the dark, and huffed that a "designing woman" had "hoodwinked" poor Hat. Wounded feelings took a long time to heal.

Another "grandpa" was present at the reception besides Grandpa Limbaugh. William H. Peck attended along with several of his children. He came up to Evelyn quietly and gave her an undisclosed amount of money. She said later it was a wedding gift that she used to buy curtains for the Creswell house. Some of his children said it was a loan and claimed that their father held her IOU. They brooded over it for years, and after he died in 1937 demanded payment. She was broke at the time and in the process of moving to Idaho. But grudgingly she paid back an undisclosed sum, and eventually both families reconciled.

Evelyn was the last of Edward and Martha's children to marry, and the last to bear children of her own. Child-bearing in Mortimore households reflected both the procreative instincts of traditional families and the limitations of medical care in the twenties and thirties. Merton and Genevieve's family had already grown by three by the time Evelyn was wed, but one child died of bone cancer at age sixteen. Olive and her husband, John, had two children, but at six months of age their firstborn came down with a mysterious illness that was never properly



Figure 59 Huldah and David

Huldah and David. Paul Mortimore was a dedicated young evangelist but tired of the bachelor life after nearly five years on the road. In January 1923, at a tiny rural church in eastern Oregon, he spotted a hazel-eyed beauty named Huldah. Paul's father married them two years later. Their first child, David, was born in 1926. Two more girls followed in the early 1930s.

diagnosed and died during exploratory surgery. Evelyn and Hat had two children four years apart, with a miscarriage in between. Hat's siblings, a generation older than the Mortimores, had larger families but similar problems raising them to adulthood.

Paul Mortimore and his wife, Huldah, escaped the medical tragedies common to parenthood in those years, but not the economic hardships. Huldah was a devoted mother who raised three healthy children, but her husband's modest income did not satisfy all the family's needs, especially after the birth of their first child (David) late in 1926. She had not taught school since their marriage in 1925, and by the time David was old enough to be left with caregivers, her teaching credentials needed upgrading again.

More education—and a better salary—was on Paul's mind as well after three years at Gladstone. In the summer of 1928 they decided it was time for a change. Paul resigned his Gladstone position and took a pastorate at Santa Clara, a suburb of Eugene. His parents, who had been struggling to make ends meet after leaving Hermiston, came with them. Fortunately Edward, though sixty-three, found work as janitor of Santa Clara High School, while Martha took care of David. That left Paul free during the week to attend Eugene Bible College (EBC), a

Christian seminary, later reorganized as Northwest Christian College. To supplement his church income he also joined the EBC faculty as director of instrumental music. With David's daily care in good hands, Huldah was free to attend the University of Oregon. Before she could complete her education, however, in February 1929 the plans changed. Evidently dissatisfied with their new minister, Paul's Gladstone congregation "called us back," as Huldah remembered it.²² Whether it was duty or the hope of monetary reward or dissatisfaction with the program at Eugene that called the loudest, remains unclear. But now with Paul better positioned, and with expenses reduced by living in a refurbished parsonage, Huldah resumed her domestic duties and put off teaching until the beginning of World War II.

The Mortimore and Limbaugh families, related by marriage and motivated by a common desire to succeed, defined success differently and took different paths to reach their goals. With limited education and lacking specialized job skills or professional training to compete effectively in a rapidly changing world, most of the Limbaughs remained tied to a pastoral culture. Like the agrarians of Jefferson's day, they glorified husbandry as the essence of production and the foundation of American virtue. The Mortimores, on the other hand, after failing as homesteaders over a half-century of struggle, first on the Great Plains and then in central Oregon, joined the urban workforce after World War I but continued to struggle through the uncertain twenties, and slipped backward in the desperate thirties. Through these early decades of the twentieth century, both families struggled to reconcile traditional values with the rising tide of urban culture. Some family members resisted any change, while others seemed to welcome it. Economic realities often impacted their choice of mates and influenced their decisions about bearing and rearing children. Both families, however, whether reconciled to change or determined to hold fast to the old ways, eventually succumbed to the inexorable march of new ideas and values across the western landscape.

Family Life in the Great Depression, 1929–1937

The difficult years between the Great Crash of 1929 and the outbreak of World War II tested the strength of America's bedrock economic and social values as never before or since. Classical capitalism and rugged individualism, the ideological twins of the Roaring Twenties, ducked for cover in the downward spiral of prices, wages, jobs, and hope that characterized the period. Despite New Deal efforts to prime the economic pump and restore confidence, the hard times ended only when the alarm bells of fascism, clanging incessantly by 1938, finally sparked an upsurge in orders for American guns, tanks, planes, and ammo. Preparations for war, rather than New Deal programs, rescued American business and society from a decade of depression.

Families also faced formidable challenges after 1929. Buried in debt and often moving frequently, they lived precariously during the worst depression years. Collapsing farm prices accelerated the migration from farm to city as farm workers and extended family members dispersed. But city jobs had disappeared in the vortex of a falling economy, leaving millions of workers and their families without adequate means of support. The influx of new urbanites added to the burden on private charities and churches, the only institutions available in that era to provide necessities to the destitute and the desperate. Some families crowded together into tiny flats or garages or even chicken coops to

save expenses. Husbands stood in long lines in front of soup kitchens or employment agencies; wives took in laundry or boarders to make ends meet. Other families could not stand the strain and split apart. Though high costs kept the divorce rate down during the thirties, desertions mushroomed.¹

In the Pacific Northwest, the Limbaugh and Mortimore families provide contrasting examples of how extended family members learned to cope with economic hardships. Though the Mortimores proved more adaptive to the vicissitudes of urban life than the Limbaughs, financial insecurity and marginal employment kept both families struggling regardless of location or occupation. Changing economic and social conditions also influenced political decisions at the family level. The Mortimores and many other traditional Christian families fought to save Prohibition and other Progressive moral programs from the pragmatic politics of the New Deal. They also feared, like Herbert Hoover, the demoralizing effects of government intervention in the daily lives of working-class Americans. In contrast, the Limbaughs were direct beneficiaries of government-sponsored job programs and loans. They welcomed the introduction of a safety net for marginal workers and their families, but soon began to chafe under the bureaucratic impositions that accompanied the new programs. In trying to steer through the labyrinth of choices between freedom and security in the perilous thirties, these two related families took different paths.

From Teacher to Farmer

The national economy seemed in good hands when Evelyn Mortimore married John Hadley Limbaugh the last day of March 1929, just twenty-seven days after Herbert Hoover's inauguration as president. Born to a farming family on a central Oregon homestead, Evelyn understood small farm mentality even though she had never farmed herself. As a young adult without family financial support, she had started a career in education after completing basic teacher's training, but after three years of trying to earn a living while struggling to keep up with revised state credential mandates she was happy to marry a farmer and assume more traditional domestic responsibilities.

Figure 60 Evelyn at Creswell

In 1929 Evelyn gave up teaching to marry a farmer, John Hadley Limbaugh. Their new home was a farmhouse at Creswell, Oregon, where “Hat,” as she called him, had 200 acres in grain and hay. She knew nothing about farming but told him that she was “willing to learn.” He tested her on the tractor, but he mostly relied on her to handle the paperwork—at least in the early years when he could do a full day’s work. Her jobs increased later, as the effects of polio took their toll on his legs.



Despite a troubling decline in grain prices in the late twenties, “Hat” was confident that they could make a good living on his 200-acre farm near Creswell in Oregon’s upper Willamette Valley, a few miles south of Eugene. Evelyn knew nothing about farming but was eager to learn, especially after receiving word from state education officials that she could not continue teaching without upgrading her credentials. She was also physically robust, in contrast to her husband’s crippled leg and spinal curvature, the debilitating legacy of polio twenty years before. Heedless of the long-range effects on her own health, she welcomed the chance to help her husband.

Anyone who has personally farmed for a living knows the reality of intensive labor, day after day, week after week, with little relief during the harvest season, and almost none at all if the farm has livestock. The small family farm in the thirties was often a dreary workplace that left little room for beauty or romance. It was also dangerous, with little understanding of occupational hazards and little time for safety precautions. Most small farms were marginal operations, very different from those “factories in the fields,” the big commercial entities described in essays by Carey McWilliams and novels by John Steinbeck. Despite

their differences, however, big and little farmers shared common attitudes toward the land and its resources. They thought land useless unless it was made productive for human purposes.

Farmwomen like Evelyn Limbaugh labored in the field as well as the home. For the first few weeks of their marriage Evelyn had an additional burden, since she still had a contract to complete as critic teacher at the Children's Farm Home in Corvallis, forty miles from the Creswell farm. To finish the school year she commuted three or four days a week. On weekends and holidays she helped her husband with farm work, as her date book for 30 May 1929 attests: "Decoration Day, Put water in House on Farm; home all day." After school ended that summer and her credential expired she immersed herself in her husband's occupation, quickly learning the "ropes" of farming with tractor, drill, cultivator, and other machinery. She also took over the paperwork, keeping the books, paying the bills, figuring the taxes—jobs that Hat, with only a grade school education, was glad to turn over to her. He was a good farmer but a better irrigator and orchardist, tasks more suitable to his limited physical abilities.

Evelyn's accounting skills took on added importance during the winter of 1929–30, when the national economy began to feel the effects of October's Great Crash. An upsurge of bank closures left those banks still open raising their rates, making fewer loans, and holding debtors to stricter account. With farm prices declining, the Limbaughs felt the pinch of shrinking income and increasing debt. All of Hat's savings had gone into the farm purchase, leaving nothing for operating expenses. Like most farmers in that era his cash flow depended on leveraging debt, using future crops and chattels as collateral. Early in 1930, the newlyweds mortgaged their personal property to raise money for seed grain and other supplies. Hat's horses and Chrysler coupe secured \$200 for three months. Evelyn's newer Pontiac brought in \$371.40 for the same period. Soon they added the tractor, disk, and plow to the list, counting on the spring grain crop to settle accounts.² It did, but there was barely enough left to live on for the rest of the year.

Times were tougher the next spring, when they went back to the bank for another round of chattel mortgages. With up to a quarter of

the workforce in some states unemployed, with breadlines lengthening in the cities and little “Hooverilles” springing up all across the land, the Limbaughs borrowed enough to plant a grain crop and raise a few sheep but couldn’t find a buyer at harvest time. By the summer of 1931 farm prices had sunk to only 58 percent of 1919 levels, yet costs for industrial goods had declined only 15 percent. Farmers everywhere were caught in an impossible bind, with no market, no income, and no more credit, yet suffocating under a mountain of debt and no relief in sight. In the Midwest, farm foreclosures were already escalating, but so was an alarming rise of farm radicalism and violence. After a mixed mob of Arkansas tenant farmers looted stores for food, Will Rogers told his radio audience, “Paul Revere just woke up Concord, these birds woke up America.”³

California or Bust

In Oregon, the Limbaughs avoided both foreclosure and radicalism by pulling up stakes. They sold off their livestock for whatever it would bring, fallowed their land, put the farm up for sale, stored their furniture, and drove to Southern California to see what they could find. It was a gutsy move, Evelyn told me later, but also pragmatic. The land they were on lacked irrigation water, and the sandy soil of the upper Willamette Valley was not very productive. Trying to farm there was a risky business. This was doubtless hindsight, a view quite different from Hat’s rosy optimism when they were first married. On the other hand, Hat’s brother and sister-in-law, Marvin and Mollie Limbaugh, had lived in Santa Ana since the early twenties and were doing well enough. Marvin’s job as foreman in a fruit-packing shed seemed encouraging to Hat, and Evelyn might be able to find a teaching or nursing position.

Just before they left—or perhaps just as they arrived in Los Angeles; the record isn’t clear—they found a party willing to trade. He took their Creswell farm in exchange for three lots in Whittier and a house on 33rd and Figueroa Streets, just across from the campus of the University of Southern California. Now they were landowners in the City of Angels, an alien environment to inexperienced country folk but



Figure 61 The Limbaughs in Los Angeles

With the Depression sinking farmers everywhere, Evelyn and Hat traded their 200-acre farm in Creswell, Oregon, for two lots, a little cash, and a house in Southern California. They pinned their future on hopes of finding jobs, but found breadlines instead. They stayed for several months, looking for work, trying to adjust, and occasionally soaking up the sun and taking in the sights with a few relatives.

ideologically connected to an older, familiar spiritual tradition. Los Angeles, wrote Bible Belt evangelist Bob Schuler in 1922, “is the one city in the nation in which the white, American, Christian idealism still predominates.”⁴ In the booming twenties it was a haven for job seekers and retirees from the Midwest, who reinforced the dominant values of the conservative business and political leadership.

Idealism faded rapidly, however, in the urban jungles of 1931. Instead of jobs the Limbaughs found bread lines and fruit peddlers, drifters and the downtrodden, a metropolis in trouble and getting worse every passing week. Hat was thoroughly disillusioned after a few attempts to find work. The crowds and the congestion intimidated him; he couldn’t even pass the driver’s test, though his wife—always confident behind the wheel—succeeded after several tries. But a few weeks of futile job hunting, watching their savings dwindle all the while, was enough to set them packing again. Fortunately the Los Angeles real estate market was still strong. They found a cash buyer for their Whittier lots and sold their house on Figueroa to a foresighted tailor who

lived across the street and wanted to expand his business. Feeling lucky to break even on the venture, these two humbled rustics headed back to the familiar landscapes of western Oregon.

La Grande Interlude

While Evelyn and Hadley Limbaugh were still settling down to farm life at Creswell, Evelyn's brother Paul Mortimore exchanged his Gladstone pastorate for one in La Grande, a scenic farming community in the Blue Mountains of northeastern Oregon. The move was prompted in part by Huldah's doctor, who told her the allergies she had acquired in the soggy Willamette Valley might disappear in a higher and drier climate. For hunters like Paul it was an attractive area, with deer plentiful in the woody hills and game birds abundant in the fields. He was also ready to move again after two separate terms at Gladstone. Nomadic like his father but more ambitious, he was a builder, an innovator with a penchant for adventure. He loved to travel and felt stale and depressed if bound too long to one church. New challenges energized him, while mundane tasks and endless routine made him impatient, eager to escape.

A deteriorating domestic relationship added to his restlessness. Outwardly charming, to her husband Huldah was a fretful, nagging wife, unhappy with the family's meager income and suspicious of Paul's female friends. Doubtless this vexatious home life aggravated his chronic indigestion. He was a finicky eater with a "sensitive stomach," avoiding acidic food and coarse vegetables and cereals, but feasting on wild game and fresh fruit.⁵ Moving to a mountain town that welcomed hunters and fisherman, a rural region with a meat and potatoes culture, was to Paul a gastronomical pleasure as well as an act of spiritual renewal.

It was also an opportunity to advance his professional career. La Grande had an older and larger Church of Christ than the one at Gladstone, with a friendly congregation of farmers and merchants who welcomed the progressive idealism of an experienced evangelist. They liked his emphasis on activities for youth, and they enjoyed his expanded musical programs.

The Christian Church was an American original, an auspicious home for devout patriots like Paul Mortimore. A product of the evangelical ferment known as the Second Great Awakening in the first two decades of the 19th century, the new movement rejected much of the dogmatic superstructure that had been erected over nearly two thousand years of church history. Instead of creeds and clerics, elaborate edifices and ritualized sacraments, Paul's Christians devised a simple formula for every individual: faith, confession, redemption, and salvation. This was the "good news" of the New Testament, a promise and a prescription, a guideline for daily life and an offer of immortality. By the 1830s three or four different streams of "New Light" protestant reformers with essentially the same message had converged to form the Christian Church, or Disciples of Christ. A century later, despite conservative opposition, the more liberal congregations joined other ecumenical protestant denominations, eventually reorganizing as the United Churches of Christ. Paul's branch remained outside the mainstream.⁶

Although there was general agreement on fundamentals, not every Christian congregation in Paul's era thought liturgical music was a blessing. The function and form of music in worship had been hotly disputed among many evangelical Protestant churches since before the Puritan era. Within Paul's own denomination, debates over the place of instrumental music had led to a split in 1906 between the mainstream churches and those thereafter designated as "Churches of Christ non-instrumental." This was symptomatic of chronic sectarian squabble, the bane of democratic Protestantism. Arguments over the form and function of worship, or the meaning of vague biblical words and passages, had splintered Christianity into a thousand fragments. Religious dogmas alienated many thoughtful Christians. As the heretical John Muir once remarked, "I have no patience at all for the man who complacently wipes his pious lips & waves me away from a simple rite which commemorates the love & sacrifice of Christ ... simply because in his infallable judgement I am mistaken in the number of quarts of that common liquid we call water which should be made use of in baptism...." Muir satisfied his spiritual quest by rejecting



Figure 62 Paul and Orchestra

Music was a vital part of Paul Mortimore's ministry. "The very origin of music," he preached, "seems to have been in the worship of God." He felt the power of the Holy Spirit in sentimental hymns and soaring credenzas. A self-taught soloist, instrumentalist, and conductor, he believed preaching and performing were all part of the same expressive outreach, a spiritual bridge connecting the minister with his community. Here he is (with baton) in the late 1920s leading a church orchestra in Gladstone, Oregon. One of the violinists is his wife Huldah (wearing glasses)

dogmatic religion for the rationalism of nature, leaving the sectarian "hard shells," as he called them, to fight over trivia.⁷

But music was not trivial to mainstream congregations within the Church of Christ, and to buoyant Christians like Paul Mortimore. Music was a vital part of his ministry, an expression of God's love and a manifestation of the Divine in the individual. "The very origin of music ...," he wrote, "seems to have been in the worship of God." It was an educational tool as well as an emotional release from the stresses of work and home. He felt the power of the Holy Spirit in sentimental hymns and soaring credenzas. He was a virtuoso with a varied repertoire, especially during Sunday vesper services. Evening worshippers were entertained by a musical variety show. They saw and heard their leader singing favorite hymns, strumming the guitar, sometimes directing the choir or playing the flugelhorn or cello or trumpet while

conducting a church orchestra. Uplifting music, followed by a poignant homily, gave parishioners a spiritual boost to start the workweek. The night service was a “real drawing card,” Huldah remembered years later, an event that filled pews and brought invitations to perform at nonreligious venues. Paul welcomed opportunities to expand and enrich the town’s musical life. Sermonizing and performing were all part of the same expressive outreach, a spiritual bridge connecting the minister with his community.⁸

Outreach also called for community service beyond the pulpit. It was easy to be a joiner in La Grande if you were white and born and raised in neighboring Umatilla County, as were both Paul and Huldah. Leaders and laymen alike saw in this handsome couple the same ethnic features and rural values shared by their own families and friends. One admirer’s letter of recommendation, embellished but still revealing, underscores the characteristics that made the Mortimores a welcome addition to any small town:

Brother Mortimer has a pleasing personality and an impressive, dignified appearance in the pulpit. He has an unusually good delivery, a fine voice, and has had special work as a song evangelist. He is a splendid organizer, a tireless worker, and with all, a true man of God. Add to the above qualifications a wife—such a wife as god intended man to have. To know Mrs. Mortimer is to appreciate her and love her.⁹

In this friendly climate the Mortimores received invitations to participate in a variety of service clubs and benevolent organizations, but they drew limits on the type and level of involvement. Paul became a Red Cross volunteer in charge of welfare programs, but he steered clear of fraternal groups that flaunted Prohibition. Huldah had little time and perhaps less inclination to develop a busy social life. She had strong maternal instincts and wanted a larger family. Two daughters, Elois and Gloria, were born to the Mortimores while they lived at La Grande. After Paul’s parents, Edward and Martha, moved to La Grande in 1931 to be closer to their grandchildren and help with babysitting,

Huldah took a few classes at La Grande's Eastern Oregon Normal School—the same institution her sister-in-law Evelyn had been invited to help administer years earlier but had declined because of ill health. For Huldah, however, children were more important than career or social activities. The joys and responsibilities of motherhood kept her busy at home, with extracurricular activities confined primarily to organizations for churchwomen.

Paul's career took a new turn when he joined the La Grande Post of the American Legion. Chartered by Congress in 1919 to promote the interests of returning veterans, the Legion grew rapidly after demobilization, with new chapters spreading across the United States from its headquarters in Indianapolis. Paul's eligibility for membership rested on his ROTC training in 1918, but he lacked time and opportunity to join before the 1930s. Perhaps he was also ambivalent because of the Legion's opposition to Prohibition.¹⁰ Though the pietist tradition abhorred dissipation and other personal vices, Legionnaires were veterans, after all, and veterans had traditions of their own. One of the oldest was having or sharing a drink with a buddy or friend.

Despite his aversion to liquor, Paul warmed to the Legion's motto "For God and Country" and welcomed its conservative political voice. By the early twenties, with rising national influence, the organization had developed a comprehensive patriotic and religious agenda. Reflecting values and tactics that sound familiar in today's post-9/11 atmosphere, Legionnaires in the 1920s advocated legislation to protect the flag from desecration, promote prayer in school, "Americanize" immigrants by providing English-only indoctrination programs, and restrict immigration from non-European countries. In the era of the Red Scare and Sacco and Vanzetti, eighty years before Osama bin Laden, Legionnaires were suspicious of all "hyphenated Americans," especially aliens who had not participated in World War I. On the West Coast, long before World War II, Legion members led the anti-Japanese movement. Local chapters passed resolutions that would prohibit alien land ownership or rental, dissolve alien corporations, ban Japanese "picture brides" from entering the country, withhold citizenship from U.S.-born children of aliens, and banish all Japanese aliens from U.S. soil.¹¹

Defending America meant defending “capitalism and its culture,” as New Dealer Jerome Davis characterized the conservative economic platform. In Pennsylvania, after a few students and instructors organized a foreign policy club to discuss U.S. military intervention in Nicaragua to save American corporations from nationalization, a local Legion commander said, “There is no justification for students in a tax-supported institution to criticize the government that gives them an education.” In the 1930s many Legion leaders sided with farmers, police, landowners, businessmen, and other conservatives in fighting the rising tide of labor radicalism. In California and Washington, some Legionnaires joined vigilantes in midnight raids on jails to terrify, torture, and brutalize strike leaders.¹²

Whether the Legion rank and file supported the views of its leadership is a matter of conjecture. Certainly extreme positions on matters of national social policy did not appeal to all members. The majority joined the Legion because of its primary mission, to promote the welfare of returning veterans. In the 1920s with the bonus bills, the VA hospitals, and later in the 1940s with the GI Bill—the most important of all Legion-sponsored legislation—Legionnaires became active champions of direct government aid to a large segment of the middle class and working poor. Considering the conservative values of its policymakers, the irony of the Legion’s influence on national policy was not lost on military critics like Walter Millis. “By their demands for adequate pay, pensions and recognition of their services,” he wrote, “[Legionnaires] have made a considerable contribution—much greater, probably, than the leaders of the American Legion realize—to the modern welfare state.”¹³

Writing in the 1950s, at a time of increasing conservative unease with the social legacy of the Depression, Millis profited from two decades of hindsight. But in the early 1930s the social and political ramifications of Legion-sponsored welfare programs for millions of unemployed veterans could not be foreseen. Conservatives like Paul Mortimore, an implacable foe of socialism and communism, saw no contradiction between Legion social policies and fundamental Christian values. Legion positions on matters of charity, immigration, civil

defense, business, education, and national politics were secular extensions of Christian stewardship. Regardless of their “calling” or line of work, Christians had an obligation to protect and care for others, to share and extend the blessings of faith and freedom. That message came straight from Jesus, who taught his followers both by word and example. To emphasize the point during the Flapper Era, when Americans seemed to be carried away by the pursuit of pleasure and profit, Bruce Barton wrote *The Man Nobody Knows*, a phenomenal bestseller that Paul must have read. Barton characterized the Messiah as a businessman with a humanitarian spirit who “was never too busy to turn aside for a sick man, a friend, a little child.”¹⁴

Stewardship also required strong and courageous leadership, a willingness to sacrifice for the Greater Good. The epitome of strong leadership was the Lord and Master himself, a prophet, teacher, and martyr with a message of salvation for rich and poor alike, regardless of skin color, class, or ethnic identity. As a good Legionnaire, Paul thought strong leadership essential, especially in times of domestic unrest and international instability. In a pocket notebook he always carried and often consulted when asked to speak at service clubs or other public venues, he jotted down the basis of a talk on leadership: “Must be able to select real values. World troubled by those who chose wrong—followed wrong leaders.” The same theme formed the basis of one of his favorite sermons: “God Give us Men,” leaders like Lincoln or Teddy Roosevelt who could rise above their own limitations. The world needed “Men of Iron,” with a “perfect heart and willing mind” to do the Lord’s bidding, as David told Solomon. Weaklings, cowards, and misfits need not apply. “Imagine Grant charging up heights of Petersburg, Cold Harbor or Wilderness garbed in monocle and wrist watch,” Paul wrote in his sermon notes, probably in the late 1930s, reflecting both Civil War knowledge and a backwoods bias against aristocrats like Teddy’s cousin FDR. Not surprisingly, there were no Democrats on Paul’s list of “Men of Iron.”¹⁵

Strong leadership was a corollary to strong national defense, the American Legion’s most consistent and assertive platform. Some Christian activists today cite the teachings of Jesus and his followers as

the moral basis for pacifism and nonviolence, but in the troubled world of the 1930s Legionnaires like Paul Mortimore saw no contradiction between Christianity and militant patriotism. In contrast to Mennonites and other pacifist Christians who opposed war on any grounds, or who took immutable doctrinal positions, Paul embraced a more pragmatic view of scripture, a position borne out of the American evangelical reform tradition. Rejecting the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, Paul's Christians adopted the Arminian theology of free will. The Bible was an infallible guide, but what path to choose was up to the individual. "God has done all he can do. Man must do the rest," Paul wrote in his sermon notes. In "the great battle for your soul, Christ [is] for you, [the] Devil against you. *You* must decide." In political terms, that meant humanity must bear its own burdens, must make its own choices between right and wrong. Those who choose the Right must be prepared to defend it at all costs against fascism and other "Strange and divers doctrines." In "What Will the Harvest Be?" a sermon based on the familiar passage in Galatians, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap," Paul anticipated the next global confrontation between the forces of good and evil:

And what of Germany? With all her great commercial supermacy [sic], her military machines equaled by none on earth. She sowed broad cast the doctrines of atheism, anarchy and socialism, given to the world by such monsters as Lenin and Trotsky, sowed materialism to the exclusion of spiritualism; and today, Sherwood Eddy says, even the devils of hell would say they have payed to the bitterest dregs. America, BEWARE. God's spirit will not always strive with man. That which we sow today, we must reap tomorrow with bitter tears!¹⁶

Preaching preparedness in a Legion uniform not only warned Americans of the dangers ahead but also demonstrated his belief that God helped those who helped themselves.

After two years in La Grande during the depths of Depression, Paul tried to practice what he preached about the "need of Christian prin-

cipals [sic] in business.” The friendly farm congregation applauded his innovative musical and youth programs, but moral support did not pay the bills of a growing family. As the economy weakened and the monthly giving diminished, Paul applied for a pastorate in more prosperous Walla Walla, across the Columbia where new lands were opening on irrigated farmland. Finding a better job, however, was a forlorn hope for most people, even preachers, in those tough times. When the Walla Walla opportunity failed to materialize, Paul stayed in La Grande but decided to go into business for himself as a sideline to preaching.

Small business startups were risky under any circumstances; the Depression only made them riskier. Economic savants might have counseled against Paul’s decision, but he was a risk-taker, an innovator with a new idea. America had fallen in love with the new medium of radio, but by the early 1930s uncensored programming had reached the lowest common denominator of popular taste. Lee DeForrest, inventor of the vacuum tube, which had made radio possible, deplored the results in an address to broadcasters:

What have you done with my child [radio]? You have made him the laughing stock to intelligence, surely a stench in the nostrils of the gods of the ionosphere. Murder mysteries rule the waves by night and children are rendered psychopathic by your bedtime stories. This child of mine is moronic, as though you and your sponsors believe the majority of listeners have only moron minds.¹⁷

Paul’s answer to this cultural blight was Christian broadcasting. Church services had first been heard over the air in New York in 1922, but few stations regularly offered transcribed Christian music or sermons. Paul was convinced by popular response in La Grande that Christian programs would appeal to a wide audience, especially in remote farming communities. It was a logical extension of evangelism, spreading “the work of the church and the hope of the world.” Borrowing money from a wealthy widow, a member of his congregation

evidently taken with the idea, he invested in recording equipment and began transcribing his Sunday services. He also hired a young man and sent him on the road to peddle these transcriptions to stations throughout the region.

Hardly had this venture begun when Paul added another: selling musical equipment and supplies. The “La Grande Music Company” started small in a retail storefront with “Musical Instruments of Quality.” Before long it expanded into “Pianos, Radios, Refrigerators,” sheet music and a variety of other products. By 1935, with the nation’s economic signals just beginning to perk up, Paul hired his sister Evelyn as sales manager and hoped that increased sales would shortly yield a profit.¹⁸

That was not to be. Paul’s idea was decades ahead of its time. Today, Christian radio is one of America’s fastest-growing media phenomenon. Seventy years ago it was technically and economically premature. The national economy, showing some signs of life in 1935, started to stall again within a year and within two years was slumping back into depression.¹⁹ Paul’s venture failed long before that, however, not because of macroeconomic forces but for reasons much more local and human. The young employee Paul had hired to market his sermon transcriptions, opened an office in Portland instead of going on the road and “lived high on the hog.” By the time Paul called this malfeasant prodigal to account it was too late. He had skipped out, leaving nothing but unpaid bills and bad credit. The store in La Grande was also in trouble, with revenue barely exceeding expenses, and nervous creditors waiting in the wings. The most persistent creditor was an elderly widow in Paul’s congregation, now clamoring for repayment. Broke and discouraged, Paul sought bankruptcy protection for his business but vowed personally to pay back every cent he owed the lady lender. Every month for the next several years, until the debt was paid, he sent her \$20. Huldah resented what she considered a gratuitous gesture, for it deprived the Mortimore family of badly needed income. Was it right to send 10 percent of his salary to a wealthy widow when his own children had to wear worn-out shoes stuffed with paper? She pointed out—rightly and repeatedly—that bankruptcy had ended Paul’s legal

obligation to the old widow, but as a Christian minister he felt a deep moral obligation. It was a sore point between them for years, and even affected his sermons. One he titled “Men Wanted” argued that God’s promise to Solomon of “wisdom and wealth—didn’t include wives!”²⁰

The Newberg General Hospital

The Mortimore family was just beginning its second year at La Grande when the Limbaughs returned from California, wiser but still out of work. They arrived in Newberg in the fall of 1931, where Hat’s brother Bennett and his wife Minnie were struggling to keep up payments on Newberg Orchards, the farm they had unfortunately purchased just before the crash in 1929. Poor health added to their troubles: both had asthma that grew increasingly severe in a home surrounded by apples, cherries, and apricots, all requiring frequent doses of sulfur, arsenic, and other sprays to meet market demand. In addition, Bennett had a deteriorating hip joint that would soon require surgery. Under the circumstances they welcomed a little help from their visitors, who stayed for a few weeks while they looked for jobs.

Ironically, Minnie’s experience in doctor’s offices led directly to a new opportunity for her relatives. She suggested that her sister-in-law Evelyn talk with an ambitious new physician in Newberg, Dr. Wilcox, about reopening a private hospital that had been closed for some time for lack of a good administrator. Prior to the 1950s private hospitals were common in rural communities and small towns, but the quality and cost of care varied widely. Wilcox had a growing practice but lacked facilities for obstetrics and convalescent care. Opening up a hospital for routine in-patients seemed an obvious need, but were the Limbaughs prepared for such a drastic occupational change? Evelyn had started a career in nursing, but a month of training and a year or so helping a rural doctor deliver babies did not add up to competence as a healthcare professional. Hadley had more handicaps than credentials; he had a curved back and a shriveled leg, knew nothing about nursing, and didn’t care to know much. All he ever wanted to do was farm, but personal predilections counted for little when times were bad. He supposed that he could be the janitor and general maintenance man while



Figure 63 Newburg Hospital

Evelyn and John Hadley Limbaugh returned from California in the fall of 1931, wiser but still out of work. At the suggestion of her sister-in-law Minnie, Evelyn negotiated with a new doctor in Newburg to reopen a private hospital. It was a gutsy experiment, an indication of desperate times for hard-luck middle-class couples. With Evelyn as administrator and Hat as handyman and janitor, they kept the hospital open for a year and a half during the worst months of the Great Depression.

she ran the office. They talked it over, with Evelyn's energy and enthusiasm carrying the day. Then they went to see Dr. Wilcox. He welcomed the proposal and even loaned them the money to get started.

There was a lot to do. The place was an empty shell, but with the doctor's money they rented the property and all the medical equipment, including beds, gurneys, tables and chairs, even operating room facilities and tools for emergency care and deliveries. Medicine was easy to acquire in those days, including narcotics. For years, in case of household emergencies, Evelyn had kept in her medicine cabinet vials of morphine, atropine, codeine, and other drugs left over from the Newburg years. To save money on food, Hat started a big garden in the back yard. It was not the type of farming he had in mind, but it added a variety of fresh and canned vegetables to the hospital fare. Perhaps that was a boon to business, for the Newburg General Hospital filled to capacity soon after it opened in the spring of 1932.

As administrator, Evelyn's highest priority was to ensure the quality of nursing care. A registered nurse was essential, and she set out to hire one by advertising in the *Portland Oregonian*. Considering today's strict federal and state hiring guidelines, her written notes while interviewing the twenty-three applicants would not impress modern personnel directors. What criteria she used are not entirely clear, but religious denomination seemed important to her. Some candidates were appealing; others "not so hot." "Likes to try the work," she wrote on one application, then added with emphasis: "*No!* of all the *dumb ones*." One was a Nazarene who seemed "rather old fashioned [but] I imagine thorough." Another was a "Very attractive girl. Alert. Observing." Still another was "Lutherin. [sic] Very interesting." The Depression had an obvious impact; one candidate, a former bank clerk, was "rather a pleasant girl. Very anxious to try." Another "needs work very badly." "Papa comes along," she wrote on one young woman's file while her father observed: "Says I can depend on his girl." On another application she scribbled: "Presbyterian; Live at home & sew; Red hair, big, shuts one eye when she talks." Evelyn did not record who got the job.

The Limbaughs ran the Newberg General Hospital from the spring of 1932 to the fall of 1933. As a business venture, it was neither a success nor a failure. It survived the very bottom of the Great Depression, but the proprietors had gained little more than experience. In an era before health insurance in the U.S., charity cases ate into hospital earnings even more than they do today. Evelyn had established a "firm" policy requiring patients to show evidence of ability to pay before admission, but in the dreary last half of Hoover's term, with hungry men fighting over barrels of garbage, with middle-class women cutting up old coats for bathmats, with some families living on dandelions and wild roots and others living in culverts and cardboard boxes, she had to write off many accounts. She told one pregnant young woman to have her boyfriend come in advance and make a down payment, but when the baby was due the woman arrived, penniless and alone, and was admitted. After the delivery and a day or two of convalescence, she walked out with her newborn in one hand and a bill for services rendered in the other, and was never heard from again.²¹

The First Hundred Days of the New Deal were over by the time the Limbaughs left Newberg, but the hopeful signs that a national recovery was beginning had little to do with the move. Dr. Wilcox precipitated the change by moving his office from the building next to the hospital to a bank building downtown. He wanted Evelyn to move the hospital to the top floor there as well, but Hat resisted. His legs didn't climb stairs very well. Besides, he was tired of janitor work and of just "sitting around." He wanted to go back to farming. Even if she had wanted to follow Wilcox, Evelyn was pregnant and in no position to argue. After the baby was born they would decide what to do. In the meantime Wilcox agreed to buy out their hospital interest and supplies (except for a few vials of medicine she held out). They stayed in Newberg until the baby was due, then drove to Salem, where Hat's sister Loy and her husband, Joe Reynolds, lived with Hat and Loy's father, John W. Limbaugh, in a house the senior Limbaugh had built sixteen years before. A midwife delivered "little Rossy" in the guest bedroom on 10 January 1934.

Coping with Hard Times

"Wealth is the relentless enemy of understanding," John Kenneth Galbraith wrote to begin his classic study on the widespread affluence of post-World War II American society. Most modern families in developed countries are too young and too prosperous to understand the social and psychological impact of widespread deprivation during the Great Depression. For millions of Americans between the wars the necessities—food, clothing, shelter—were inadequate, especially among minorities, the elderly, and the rural poor, the same groups who had always lived at or near the bottom of America's socio-economic strata. Indeed, in 1933 a survey of national conditions found that poverty was nothing new to large numbers of Americans. There were just many more newly poor in the thirties than there had been before.²²

The realities of life in the Great Depression were bad enough without exaggerating the conditions. Many people went hungry in America, but few starved to death. For a majority of middle-class families, suffering through the Depression years was a temporary setback, not

a permanent condition. Coping with hard times did not mean abject poverty, starvation, and homelessness, but learning to live with less. The Limbaughs discovered how hard times affected social functions in the fall of 1933, when they attended a “radio pinochle party” in which the hosts “served a ‘depression’ lunch of chili beans and crackers.”²³

Even in the worst times, however, the entertainment industry did well. Hollywood boomed in the thirties, and so did gambling, horseracing, baseball, and other sports. The saloon business skyrocketed after Roosevelt, anticipating the end of Prohibition, endorsed the sale of 3.2 beer. Immediately after FDR’s inauguration the new Congress quickly adopted the legislation, and the “wets” rejoiced. But the “drys” feared that any loosening of moral constraints was a step down the slippery slope to perdition. As one Midwestern farm wife told her friend Martha Mortimore, “I think if they’d close all the Picture shoes [sic] saloons and dance Hall[s] their would be a lot of money stay in the houses where they need it this winter to protect their Soul and body’s it dont wonder me some times why some families are down and out. they spend their last cent for pleasure....”²⁴

In an era without social security or old age pensions, living with less often placed special burdens on adult children with dependent elders. For Edward and Martha Mortimore, the pious parents of Paul and Evelyn, the depression had emotional as well as material consequences. For years they had lived a precarious existence on the margins of poverty, dependent on church and family to supplement the limited earnings Edward had made during his working years in a succession of low-paying jobs: harnessmaker, itinerant preacher, shoemaker, road grader, hired hand, and janitor. Living in rented houses and moving frequently, they had cared little for material gain. Their lives centered on religious faith and the lives of their children. In turn, religion offered solace, and their offspring repaid parental concern and attention with devotion and material support. In this family relationship love was the great equalizer, the emotional glue that inexorably bound together two different generations.

When the Depression descended the elder Mortimores were living in Santa Clara, near Eugene, Oregon, but in 1931 moved to La Grande

to be nearer their son Paul and his children. Lacking regular means of support except for the few dollars a month Edward's pension paid him as a retired state employee, they lived so meagerly that even their more distant relatives felt sorry for them. Always complaisant regardless of circumstances, Edward was doubtless amused when his penurious brother-in-law, Harry Elworthy, an English immigrant and Methodist preacher from Spokane, tried to console him. "Now brother Ed," he is reported to have said, "I know you've had a hard time, and I want to help you out." He handed Edward a quarter.²⁵

Martha did not share Edward's easy outlook on life. A chronic worrier and hypochondriac, she linked national economic troubles to personal guilt. In 1931, thinking she was about to die, she penned this *mea culpa* for her children and grandchildren:

My greatest concern is for your soul's welfare ... Oh, how sad that I ever was born into this world, if my offspring should miss all that's best in this life, and then be forever banished from the beautiful city of God.... It seems that I've made such a miserable failure of life and its responsibilities. I can't feel that I'm altogether to blame, for in many things I did the best I knew, but I simply didn't know any better.²⁶

Two years later, after another premonition that death was near, she prepared instructions to transfer \$88 from her life insurance into her estate. That would make up for the money she held in a separate account, the net proceeds from grain sales on a central Oregon homestead she and her two sisters had inherited from their father, John C. Tucker. With her personal papers now in order, she felt "resigned to the will of God, ... [and] can say 'Amen Jesus' whatever it may be."²⁷

Income from the Tucker homestead had provided a modest annual financial supplement to the senior Mortimores during the twenties, but as the Depression deepened the land became more of a liability than an asset. A severe Oregon drought in the winter of 1932–33, a harbinger of the Dust Bowl soon to devastate the Great Plains, only made a bad year worse for J. O. Youngstrom, the grain farmer leasing



Figure 64 Elworthy and EM
 Married to Edward Mortimore's sister Emma, English-born Harry Elworthy was a Methodist preacher in Spokane when this picture was taken in the mid-1930s. He is seated with Edward on one side and Emma on the other. At far right is Edward's daughter Evelyn.

the place. He wrote to Martha in August 1933, complaining of low prices and a "very poor crop all around." With grass dying even on untilled sagebrush land it would be a bad year for range cattle as well. Farm relief was not the new Roosevelt administration's top priority, however. In the flurry of bills passed in the First Hundred Days, New Dealers counted most on the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) to get American industry and the labor force moving again. But FDR had also promised to stimulate farm prices, and the new Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) proposed federal subsidies for wheat farmers in return for acreage limitations under an allotment plan. The news sounded promising to Youngstrom: "The stock can't live on beer and light wine, you know, so we hope the 'New Deal' may bring something more substantial." Though the proposed allotment scheme seemed to discriminate against small farmers, he urged Martha to participate: "Do not delay in signing the agreement when one is sent to you because the wheat grower cannot survive without this help. You will have a worthless ranch without it..."²⁸

Youngstrom's dire predictions underscored the common plight of marginal farm families during the thirties, whether they lived in Oregon or Kansas. Drought and commodity prices below the cost of production were twin blows that forced thousands more rural residents into foreclosure and exposed the flaws in the farm policy of the early New Deal. Cash-strapped states added insult to injury by increasing property taxes and in some cases adding a new category: the sales tax.

To many rural poor in the Dust Bowl the only hope was to move, as a childhood friend in Oklahoma wrote Martha in 1934. After losing his life savings in a failed business venture he tried farming but was worse off than before. Now he was so broke that moving seemed impossible. "It seems everybody has been able to go to California but me," he lamented.²⁹

Farmers on the fringes of the Dust Bowl were little better off. Another friend of the Mortimores wrote from Iowa in 1933 that things were going from bad to worse:

Well the hard times are as hard as they ever was here[;] if it wasent for our cows I guess we would have harder sledding then we have. we haven't paid our taxes here on the farm yet. I can't see where the N.A.R. [NRA] [is] doing the farmers a lick of good but making lots of things worse. here in the large stores, as well as in the other business places instead of hiring new help, they layd 1/2 the shift off the mornings, and the other 1/2 go back in the afternoon. so where has it done much good. then the[y] put such a big tax on flour that they are just starving the poor to be poorer. the same grade of flour we bought last fall at 79cts now is selling for \$1.89.... Wheat then was selling for 48 cts and to day at 74 cts now wher is that helping the poor any? when Bread is the staff of Life.³⁰

Even if the conservative Supreme Court in 1935 had not voided both the NIRA and AAA on constitutional grounds, it was clear that the New Dealers would have to come up with more innovative—and much more expensive—steps to solve the nation's farm problem. Within the Department of Agriculture, however, opinion was divided between liberals who wanted more revolutionary assistance programs to uplift all farmers, including tenants and migrant workers, and traditionalists who thought the answer was more price support and production controls. The traditionalists won, thus reinforcing a farm program that provided lucrative subsidies for big farmers but did little to aid small farmers and offered almost nothing to the rural poor.³¹

The Tucker heirs found out how little help they could expect from Washington when the tally for wheat production on the Tucker homestead came in the summer of 1935. The share for Martha and her sisters was only 35 bushels at 38 cents a bushel under the federal allotment plan. By fall, instead of federal relief they were pressured to sell the property to the new Resettlement Administration. It was authorized to buy up “submarginal” land throughout the country at a nominal price and convert it to grazing land under the Bureau of Land Management. The only alternative was to sell on the open market, but as the Resettlement agent told them, the price offered was consistent with comparable land in the area, which “has been deteriorating for some time. The wheat fields have been depleted to a point where, generally speaking, they are no long profitable.” Seeing no good alternative, the Tucker sisters took the government offer.³²

Farmland was better in the Newberg area, but with commodity prices below the cost of production, small farmers there faced the same fate as their central Oregon counterparts. Hadley’s brother Bennett avoided bankruptcy by trading his Newberg orchard for an apartment house in Portland, but ended up losing both. With a bad hip and asthma, he was in bed most of the time. Renters used the lack of maintenance as an excuse to skip payments, and Bennett’s wife, Minnie, with her own set of illnesses, did not have the strength to simultaneously fight renters and eviction battles and maintenance problems. When a doctor advised her to take her husband to a warm climate, they left for San Antonio, Texas. Her brother, an army officer, found room in a barracks building, where they spent six months in the sweltering heat of summer before returning to Newberg. A friendly banker there was drowning in foreclosed properties and sold them a small farm on generous terms. Their teenage son Duke worked as a pruner in neighboring orchards until he had earned enough to purchase a half-dozen cows. Selling cream added a little income to the \$50-a-month state disability check the family was living on, and supplemented a diet of vegetables from the family garden. After a hip operation and a long period of recuperation Bennett was eventually able to work again, but not at farming. He turned the Newberg place over to Duke.³³

Hadley was also anxious to get back to farming after selling the Newberg hospital, but he depended on Evelyn for help, and she was still recuperating from fatigue and other complaints common to older nursing mothers. They had returned to Newberg after the birth of their first child and were living in a rented house not far from Bennett's farm. The expedient nature of their daily routine is revealed in a letter she wrote to her folks in La Grande early in February 1934. After an overnight visit from Loy and Joe Reynolds, Hat's sister and brother-in-law from Salem, along with "Dad" Limbaugh, the father of the clan, Evelyn spent a day washing and drying, but lacked the energy to take up the kitchen chores. "I just couldn't make bread today," she wrote, "so I'll make more cornbread so Hat can have it with milk." The cornbread, along with half a cake and a few cookies left over from the visit, plus milk and cream from a cow they had on the property, she thought would last for the week. Daily consumption of raw milk products raised no eyebrows among farm folk in the thirties. "My! that milk and cream is sure marvelous," she exclaimed. "All I've eaten today is bread, milk & cream." The next day she was "feeling better," and planned to walk to town after baking a batch of bread. "That's all I'm going to do today besides what *has* to be done," she decided. As an afterthought, considering her husband's predilections, she addressed her father:

Say dad do you want to come up here & milk, feed, etc 5 cows for 1/2 the cream check? The bank wrote Hat yesterday that they had 5 cows they'd let him use if he'd care for them & feed 'em for 1/2 the cr. check. Most farmers can't pay expenses [with the money they receive from] ... the cream check.³⁴

The elder Mortimore evidently did not accept the offer, but Evelyn's thinking is clear. She knew that Hat wanted a farm, not a dairy. A caretaker's job for a meager return offered few advantages to a growing family with material needs, but might have given her retired father a chance to make a positive contribution to the Mortimore family finances. The offer illustrates both the complex nature of rural poverty and the plight of rural banks in the thirties. Banks still afloat after the

financial crisis of 1932–33 were buried in bad debt. Legal action was the only answer to thousands of defaulted real and chattel mortgages, but foreclosure left lending institutions holding vast quantities of collateral assets that could not be easily liquidated. Local bankers made it their business to know their communities and the financial history of their clients. Even those families with bad credit records might be worth a second chance to a banker eager to dispose of foreclosed property, as Hat's brother Bennett discovered. But local solutions were piecemeal, underfunded, erratic, and idiosyncratic, dependent on particular individuals at a given time and place. Social activists argued that what was needed was a systematic national program with substantial federal funding to help the rural poor get back on their feet—a helping hand instead of a handout, as defenders of government support characterized it. Direct rural relief was a major component of the Second New Deal (1935–37), the last big surge of social legislation before the war.

The interim between the First and Second New Deals left economically distressed families like the Limbaughs—jobless, landless, and heavily in debt—scrambling to find some means of support and avoid the abyss of destitution and despair that had claimed so many others. Hat's physical infirmities and Evelyn's new baby limited their work options in 1934, when unemployment still hovered around 22 percent nationally. Truly desperate families traditionally looked to state programs or private charities for assistance, but the magnitude of the Depression crisis soon exhausted funding from those sources. Late in 1933 some money was made available through the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), created to supplement state welfare programs. But federal intrusion into matters once the exclusive prerogative of the states raised constitutional questions. Moreover, despite the obvious need, many Americans still thought of welfare as a giveaway program for deadbeats, and state administrators often reflected that kind of rugged individualist mentality. Welfare applicants had to undergo a humiliating means test to qualify. These drawbacks made FERA a very weak, inadequate and short-lived relief program.³⁵

Under strained economic circumstances family ties often unravel and friends drift away. The Limbaughs were fortunate, however. They

turned to their extended family network for help and were rewarded with a job offer from Ted Reins, a fruit rancher in Idaho married to Hat's niece Ouida. She had been Evelyn's roommate in college and matron of honor at her wedding. In the spring of 1934, while the Limbaughs were visiting relatives at Fruitland, Ted asked Hat to help him with the apple crop. The money wasn't much, but it was honest work and the job came with a place to stay and board for the family.

Hat worked for Reins that spring and summer, and would have worked longer but for an auto accident in front of Ted's house. Riding home from the field on the running board of Ted's car, Hat was thrown to the ground when another car slammed into the opposite door as Ted's father turned into his driveway. The senior Reins escaped unhurt, but the crash fractured Hat's weak leg and laid him up for months. While he recuperated, Evelyn took charge. A friendly farm-wife convinced her that she could earn good money selling a popular line of food supplements door to door. Garrulous and gutsy, with a missionary's zeal for adventure, she made an excellent saleswoman. The business required a lot of travel, however, and the Fruitland-area market was soon exhausted. Undaunted, with Hat and Ross in tow, she teamed up with another married couple, rented a house in Boise, and proceeded to saturate the new territory with bottles of imitation vanilla extract, cloves, and red food coloring. Some of the unsold products could still be found in her kitchen cabinet twenty years later.

By the spring of 1935 the extract business had run its course. Hat was back on his feet, but not physically robust. Returning to work as a field-hand at the age of forty-two seemed out of the question. While they pondered what to do, Evelyn's brother Paul came to the rescue. Business at his new music store in La Grande was picking up, and he needed an assistant to handle the daily routine. The Limbaughs welcomed the offer, which came with a rented house and free babysitting from the elder Mortimores, who lived across the street. They were happy to help out by caring for another grandchild. The Limbaughs gladly accepted.

For the next two years the Limbaugh and Mortimore families were together in La Grande. Martha watched Ross while Evelyn worked as "sales manager." Her husband, now fully recovered from his accident,



Figure 65 Evelyn at the Music Store

Long before Christian broadcasting developed a national audience, Paul Mortimore borrowed money from a wealthy widow to buy recording equipment and start the “La Grande Music Company.”

took a job for a few months with the Works Project Administration, an urban relief program passed in 1935 as part of the Second New Deal. He earned about \$50 a month working on a new high school, but it was only temporary work, and he yearned for a chance to get back to farming. His opportunity came through the network of family and friends brought together by church fellowship. Under Paul’s leadership the Christian Church was a popular center of activity in La Grande. Hat, though never overtly religious, dutifully followed his wife’s lead, joined the church, and was baptized by his brother-in-law. That brought him into regular contact with a neighborly congregation that enjoyed worshipping and working together. One member, Charles Smutz, was a farmer and rancher who needed help operating a large acreage in the verdant foothills and bottomlands east of La Grande. Hat’s experience made him the ideal candidate, and he gladly accepted Charlie’s offer. Before long Hat was Charlie’s ranch foreman and farm advisor.

Hat worked for Smutz almost as long as Evelyn worked at the music store. But Hat wanted a farm of his own, and when the music store folded the Limbaughs found themselves once more seeking help. Evelyn was ready to return to farm life after a series of part-time jobs with little pay and no way to provide savings for the future. She also recognized Hat's frustration and desire to be the major breadwinner, doing something he loved and was capable of doing well. But farming required considerable capital investment for land, equipment, and supplies, as well as good transportation and a reliable market for farm commodities. All these were in short supply during the long years of Depression. Hundreds of thousands of dispossessed small farmers like Hat needed substantial assistance to get started again, and their plight eventually won the attention of Roosevelt's brain trusters. In 1937, one of the last pieces of legislation offering direct rural assistance passed Congress during the Second New Deal. Hat finally got his chance to farm again with help from the Farm Security Administration.

The eight years from Hoover's inauguration to the New Deal's last domestic gasp transformed the national psyche. In 1929 Americans still believed that collective prosperity stemmed from individual effort; that hard work assured material success; that economic power and the nation's global stature were the direct result of free and unlimited enterprise. By 1937, after years of declining wages, falling markets, industrial cutbacks, high unemployment, futile job searches, shocking foreclosures, and personal failures, many of those same Americans had lost faith. They no longer believed in the sanguine doctrines of rugged individualism, or in the recuperative powers and benevolence of classical capitalism. They had voted overwhelmingly for a new president who promised to overcome their fears and get America moving again, but three or four years into the New Deal, with millions spent and an army of bureaucrats sprouting like weeds from every crack and cranny of government, the nation still faced monumental economic and social problems. Some of the disillusioned and desperate turned to demagogues on the right and left, with alluring panaceas to cure society's ills

and make the nation secure. Others refused to acknowledge the need for change and yearned for a return to the conservative leadership of the twenties, when America was prosperous and business was booming. Most Americans, however, rejected extreme solutions in favor of simply hunkering down and holding on until things got better. Those with strong family ties, like the Mortimores and Limbaughs, held a collective advantage over individuals without a reliable family network. They suffered hardships like everyone else, but found strength and solace in sharing with kinfolk the bad along with the good.

Farm and Home in the Roosevelt Recession, 1937–1941

The 1930s are collectively known as the Great Depression decade, but it is more accurate to apply the phrase to just its first four years. After Roosevelt's election in 1932 the economy began to show signs of life. Although the jobless rate remained high during the First New Deal, government pump-priming—or “stimulus,” as we might call it today—was enough to spur business growth, raise prices, and start the slow road to recovery. But progress stalled after the 1936 election, and a severe recession set in that ended only after the outbreak of war in 1939.

Critics both left and right still debate the causes of what some have termed the “Roosevelt Recession.” Since it happened on his watch, he gets the blame. Though some blamed him personally and called him Dictator or Fascist or Communist, most of the criticism has focused on the programs of the Second New Deal. They were either too much or too little government interference in the economy.

How farmers viewed the Roosevelt Recession depended on their economic and social status, as well as their political views and their level of organization. Farmers everywhere in America struggled for survival during the Great Depression, but the farm problem was too complex to be easily understood. Some farmers were powerful businessmen with a strong congressional lobby; others were poor tenants

living day-to-day on a worn-out piece of rented land. In between were “borderline farmers,” as one scholar has recently described them,¹ who were neither prosperous enough to benefit greatly from New Deal price supports and other subsidies, nor poor enough to qualify for long-term relief. Based on the experiences of my own family, this chapter is a case study of one borderline farming community in southwestern Idaho during the years of economic uncertainty and federal experimentation from the late Depression to World War II.

Borderline Farmers

How farm problems are defined and addressed depends on the type of agriculture practiced and, to a lesser extent, on the size and location of the farm in question. For nearly 300 years farming was America’s principal occupation, and land the primary source of wealth and productivity. Reflecting Jefferson’s vision, the ideal agrarian model in the North had been the “family farm,” a land unit of modest size owned and operated by industrious yeomen with little outside help. Jeffersonian idealism encouraged generous land laws that offered “land for the landless,” but the consequences of settling millions of families on marginal lands in the semi-arid West left a troubling legacy of overproduction, erosion, financial instability, poverty, and agrarian discontent. Family farming in the South had its own dubious record. After the Civil War the antebellum slave plantation economy had been gradually transformed by politics and prejudice into a debt peonage system of tenant farmers and sharecroppers.

Industrialization and global competition in the years leading up to the First World War spurred the growth of larger and more specialized commercial agricultural units, still mostly family owned but more business-oriented, using the best technology and the most efficient labor available to produce the bulk of America’s staple crops. Left behind in this age of free-wheeling capitalism were those at the bottom of the agrarian ladder: poor farmers, tenants, sharecroppers, and laborers living on or working marginal or submarginal lands. Inefficient, destitute, and degraded, they were the chronic rural poor. Between these extremes were smaller and more traditional family farms, com-

mercially oriented but less efficient, less productive, and less specialized, and thus lower on the politician's list of agrarian priorities.

Commercial farmers had their best years in the "golden age of agriculture" preceding American entry into World War I, when improved technology and increasing productivity, coupled with rising global demand and higher commodity prices, gave them what they considered their fair share of national income. But this "golden age" ended in a postwar agricultural recession that after 1929 metastasized into a national farm crisis. These rural economic troubles were accompanied by social disorder of unprecedented proportions. For the rural poor, life went from degraded during the twenties to desperate during the thirties.²

Policy makers in the early years of the Depression differed on solutions to the nation's agrarian ills. President Hoover, miscast as a conservative reactionary, took important steps toward rationalizing a national farm credit and price support policy, but his emphasis on economics and engineering did nothing to help the poorest farmers. Franklin Roosevelt, in contrast, made chronic rural poverty an issue in the 1932 campaign, but his advisors were divided on what to do about it. Conservatives saw the need in short-range utilitarian and macroeconomic terms. They wanted to help the nation's "best" farmers by expanding credit, providing mortgage protection, cutting production, reducing the farm surplus, and building a floor under commodity prices. Social reformers, on the other hand, while not opposing stabilization programs for commercial producers, emphasized the long-range social consequences of low farm income, especially for tenant farmers and sharecroppers. They wanted to reform rural society by declaring, in effect, the nation's first "war on poverty."³

During the First New Deal (1933–35) both philosophical wings of FDR's "Brain Trust" were represented in farm legislation passed by a compliant Congress willing to experiment with almost any program that promised some measure of relief and recovery. To aid the nation's big farmers, Congress passed a series of bills, beginning with the Farm Credit Act (FCA) and culminating in the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA), incorporating most of the credit and subsidy features that the

powerful farm bloc of large-scale commercial operators and their political allies demanded.⁴

For the rural poor, direct relief first came through the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), established during the “Hundred Days” following Roosevelt’s inauguration. In the winter of 1934–35 it helped more than a million farm families, either with cash and temporary jobs, or loans and grants to “rehabilitate” penniless farmers who owned or rented land but could not operate without supplies and equipment. By the spring of 1935, with the need for emergency relief eased somewhat by an uptick in the economy, rehabilitation became the key concept driving new legislation and an executive order that consolidated FERA and several other farm relief programs into a new agency, the Resettlement Administration (RA). Although they continued the resettlement programs started by FERA, RA officials emphasized “rehabilitation in place” rather than resettlement to better land. Rehabilitation in place gradually turned into another form of credit for needy owners, tenants, sharecroppers and laborers who could not obtain credit elsewhere, either from private or public sources.⁵

Over the next decade, RA and its successor agency spent \$14 million trying to work a social transformation among America’s poorest rural residents by offering better land, providing grants and loans and reshaping the lives of nearly 3,000 farm families in twenty-six resettlement projects throughout the West. But the mixed results of these social experiments, the growing conservative hostility to social reform legislation after 1937, and the onset of war all contributed to their termination soon after the war ended. In contrast, federal subsidies to “agribusiness,” the nation’s largest commercial food and fiber producers, did not die with the end of Depression. Despite periodic efforts to terminate “welfare for the rich,” as critics have termed it, surplus purchase programs, price supports, and other forms of federal largess still continue today.⁶

For smaller farmers, New Deal agricultural programs were a mixed blessing. Since the early 1920s commercial farmers had been buffeted from financial pillar to post, with low commodity prices, high operating costs, and a declining standard of living. Severe drought in the

“Dust Bowl” years on the High Plains and Mountain West added to their distress. Early in the Depression years, devoid of cash and credit after traditional sources of relief and refinance shut down, many farm families gave up, left everything they had to the creditors, and joined the ranks of the urban unemployed. Some left for good; others still hoped to return to farming when conditions improved.

These were part of the “great mass of under-privileged rural people” thrust into the national political debates during the winter and spring of 1936–37. Responding to criticism that New Deal agricultural programs had done little for farm tenants and the bulk of the rural poor, FDR, soon after winning a second term in the election of 1936, established the President’s Commission on Farm Tenancy to study farm security issues. Hard data backed up the rhetoric. Of the nation’s 6 million farm families in the late 1930s, more than half had a gross income of between \$600 and \$1,000—half as much as the median urban income. Though living costs varied by region, the average amount a farm family of four needed for “minimum physical and cultural requirements,” as estimated by one contemporary sociologist, was \$790 per year. Families in the West, where costs were higher, needed \$845. Less than 2 percent of the nation’s farms grossed more than \$1,000, while 39 percent were below the \$600 rural poverty line. At the same time, most of the subsidies paid by AAA went to the wealthiest farm families, and most of the loans made by FCA and other federal lending agencies helped only a fraction of America’s small farmers. Clearly, the rural masses had fallen through the New Deal safety net.⁷

This new executive spearhead helped focus congressional debate on tenancy problems that had first been introduced in separate proposals nearly two years before. In 1935 Senator John H. Bankhead of Alabama had sponsored a bill to help landless tenants finance the purchase of good farmland. At the same time Congressman Marvin Jones of Texas sought legislation enabling tenants to obtain mortgages from the Farm Credit Administration at lower than standard interest rates. After stalling in previous sessions, those proposals were redrafted and reintroduced in January 1937, but progress was delayed until the President’s Commission issued its report and congressional committees

could hold hearings. When it finally arrived in February, the report recommended the creation of a new agency to help farm families living above the level of chronic indigence, yet too poor and unstable to qualify for standard loans from the Farm Credit Administration or other lending agencies.⁸

A compromise Bankhead-Jones Bill emerged out of the long legislative process that followed and was signed into law on 22 July 1937. It created the Farm Security Administration (FSA) and consolidated earlier programs established by executive order, including the Resettlement Administration. FSA absorbed most RA functions and responsibilities, including management of the land rehabilitation and conservation program under which the government had purchased submarginal acreage and relocated the sellers. Sensitive to conservative charges of “creeping socialism,” Congress left existing resettlement projects alone but specifically prohibited FSA from buying new lands for relocation purposes. Rather than land conservation and resettlement, the new emphasis was on rehabilitation and ownership for the rural masses, some of them “borderline farmers ... caught between poverty and economic security.”⁹

The Limbaughs Find a Farm

In the Mountain West, one of those “borderline farmers” was John Hadley Limbaugh, or “Hat,” as his wife called him, a Missouri native who had arrived in the Pacific Northwest with his parents and five siblings in 1904. He had tried for six years during the early Depression to compete in the urban job market, but his quest was made all the more difficult by the effects of an earlier bout with polio that had left him with a shriveled leg and a crooked back. He had been farming intermittently since boyhood, first for his father in Missouri, Colorado, and Oregon, then as a hired hand on a huge ranch in southwestern Idaho, and still later as a co-partner with an older brother on a fruit orchard in the lower Willamette Valley. Just before the Depression he had purchased a dryland farm near Eugene and tried raising grain, but parched crops and collapsing commodity prices ended that venture. His wife Evelyn, a schoolteacher, nurse, saleswoman, and the primary breadwinner af-



Figure 66 Idaho Borderline Farmer

Farmers everywhere in America struggled for survival during the Great Depression. Roosevelt's advisors wanted to help but differed on what to do. Early New Deal programs provided emergency relief to the poorest families and subsidized the richest, but "borderline farmers," as one scholar has called them, fell through the legislative cracks. In 1937 the Farm Security Administration was created to help these impoverished middle-class farm families through loans and direct supervision. One of these marginal farmers was John Hadley Limbaugh, shown here in 1938 with his two sons on the New Plymouth farm he rented with help from FSA.

ter their marriage in 1929, understood his frustration with city life and his resolve to farm again on irrigated land, less vulnerable to the whims of nature. As she later explained to me, she told him in the spring of 1937: "I'll go on a farm with you for five years; if we can make a go of it we'll stay, but if we can't I'll go back to teaching." Though she would have to bear much of the physical burden herself, as the dutiful wife in a traditional household she promised to subordinate her own career in order to advance his. "This just made his life all over again," she said, "because this is what he loved to do and he was a wonderful farmer."¹⁰

Though intensely personal, the decision to try farming again came just as Congress was deliberating over the new proposal to assist needy farm families. Most rural assistance was still under the jurisdiction of

the Resettlement Administration when the Limbaughs began looking for a place to rent in southwestern Idaho. For two years they had been living in an apartment in La Grande, Oregon, where Evelyn managed a music store for her brother Paul, while Hat earned a little money from WPA projects and other temporary jobs. With rumors in the air that new help to tenant farmers was on the way, Hat decided he wanted to rent an older farm on irrigated land near Emmett, country he knew had a good water supply from the Farmer's Cooperative Canal, which as a young man he had helped build and repair. So broke they had to borrow \$40 from Paul to make the trip, in February they left their three-year-old son Ross with his grandparents and drove to the Payette Valley.

In 1937 every farm county in the West had a Resettlement Agency office and an agent familiar with local conditions. After a day looking for available land in Gem County and finding nothing suitable, the Limbaughs on their way home stopped at the RA office in Payette, the county seat of neighboring Payette County. Anxious to learn about land, they instead learned from Viola Meechan, the staff secretary, about the formidable requirements for a rehabilitation loan. Later adopted with little change by FSA, the rules limited eligibility to farmers unable to obtain funds or credit from any other source. The applicant had to be an experienced and capable farmer of good character, currently operating a farm or having equity in one. The loan application had to be approved by a local committee of farmers and businessmen, and the applicant had to agree to work closely with federal supervisors, keep detailed records of both farm and household expenses and operations, open a joint checking account, and have all checks approved in advance and co-signed by the loan officer. If they qualified they would be eligible both for short-term rehabilitation money for rent, equipment, livestock, farm supplies, and household goods, as well as for long-term mortgage loans, using the land and chattels as collateral. Promoted as a social program to reform farming and educate families rather than as a business venture, rehabilitation loans averaged \$400 per borrower at rates between 3 and 5 percent, with maturities ranging from a few months to ten years.¹¹



Figure 67 Farmstead View

This is a 1940 view of the outbuildings on the “run-down” farm that was in foreclosure when Evelyn and Hat first saw it three years earlier. They borrowed \$532 from Farm Security, enough to rent the place and purchase a few supplies and equipment to get started. Note the two boys on the steel-tired tractor. It was so hard to start that the Limbaughs soon got rid of it and used horses until after World War II.

Expecting economic help but having a social covenant imposed as well was something new in the American experience. Rugged individualism was an entrenched belief if not a reality in the lives of farmers, and they resented any form of government intrusion. But pride was a commodity hard luck families could not afford in the Depression years—or at least not display if they wanted federal help. Many who signed on with RA and FSA didn’t understand the paperwork anyway, and others signed with tongue in cheek, taking the money but not the obligations that went with it.¹²

Years later, all Evelyn Limbaugh remembered about the Payette interlude was Mrs. Meechan’s encouragement. If they could find a place to rent, she was confident the agency would be able to help with finances. When they asked Meechan if she knew of any place available, she recalled a “run-down” farm of 100 acres on Highway 30 a few miles east of New Plymouth that recently had been sold at a

sheriff's sale. The foreclosed family was still living on the property, but she knew the mortgage company was anxious to put it on the market and might be willing to rent it in the interim. Excited by the prospect, the Limbaughs decided to "look the place over" before they returned to La Grande.¹³

Developing Payette Valley

The "run-down" farm lay on the outskirts of a utopian farm community founded forty years earlier as a result of promotional efforts by William E. Smythe, a Midwestern journalist and crusader for the "conquest of arid America" by means of irrigation. Irrigating the arid West had been the dream of progressive developers ever since the 1880s. A decade later Smythe took up the cause on behalf of the small farmer. In the 1890s democratic values seemed threatened by the consequences of industrialization. Populists and progressives warned of an ever-widening gap between rich and poor that undermined the "promise of American life." With the frontier "closed" because of rising population rates per square mile, small farmers could no longer look west for new opportunities. Smythe believed that the American dream could be extended through reclamation. Arid America, he said—meaning tillable soil west of the 100th meridian where rainfall was insufficient for traditional agriculture—held new promise for small farmers.¹⁴

The focus of Smythe's Idaho crusade highlighted land that once had been dismissed as "desert" by farmers following the Oregon Trail to the verdant Willamette Valley. By the 1880s, as coastal lands rose in value and inland population centers grew, developers saw new potential among the sagebrush plains and valleys of southwest Idaho. Promoters of the Payette Valley distributed rhapsodic pamphlets and newspaper articles praising the mild climate, rich soils, and abundant water supply of this 120-square mile area bounded by the Payette and Snake Rivers to the north and west, hilly uplands to the south, and high bluffs above Emmett to the east. No longer a "barren" and "foreboding" land that early travelers dismissed on their way to Oregon, Payette Valley was now considered a potential small-farm paradise, with loamy bottomlands and sandy terraces ideal for raising fruits and vegetables.

One observer on Freezeout Hill above Emmett in 1892 looked thirty miles southwest toward Payette. Ignoring the sagebrush below he envisioned “one continuous picture of gleaming river, green fields, and level virgin soil, bounded on either side by the everlasting hills....”¹⁵

The lower valley was also easily accessible, thanks to the completion of the Oregon Short Line (OSL) in 1884. The railroad skirted the valley’s southern and western edges, passing through Caldwell and Parma, and then crossing the Snake River to Nyssa and Ontario, Oregon, before returning to Idaho at Payette on its way north to Huntington, Oregon. By joining lines running east and west, the OSL ended Idaho’s long isolation from the outside world.

Payette Valley’s budding reputation as a center for fruit culture opened new opportunities for entrepreneurs. One of the most successful early businessmen was Albert B. Moss, one of Payette’s founders. Arriving in 1881 from Illinois, he and his brother Frank built a lumber business selling ties to the Oregon Short Line. After expanding successfully into retail merchandizing and banking, they used the same federal land laws as farmers and ranchers to privatize public lands that could easily be subdivided and sold. By 1895, for a combined investment of \$150, the brothers had accumulated some 1,200 acres in two townships just south of Payette. They sold 40 percent of their holdings the same year to the Payette Valley Irrigation and Water Power Company (PVIWP) for \$9,600.¹⁶

The Moss brothers were part of a group of advisors and agents working with W. E. Smythe to tie up key properties around his chosen townsite in the lower Payette Valley before outside speculators could grab them. Before the mid-1890s, Smythe had condemned the fraudulent use of the Desert Land Act by canal companies and other corporate interests. He demanded changes in federal land laws, but when that campaign fizzled he turned to colonization as the best hope for the small farmer. Using the same law he had earlier attacked, Smythe contracted with land agents to file on 5,000 acres to be reserved for colonists in 20-acre parcels at \$20 per acre. The price included a water right and the cost of infrastructure. For \$3 more per acre purchasers could buy land cleared of sagebrush.¹⁷

Smythe did not name the “large number of individuals” who acquired land for Plymouth colony, but Benjamin P. Shawhan and his family were probably the most important. Shawhan was a Midwesterner with plenty of experience in the financial world. He came to Payette in 1892 to pursue a new career as town promoter and real estate speculator. Why Payette? Sometime in the early planning stages for New Plymouth colony, Smythe toured the area and quietly organized an advisory committee made up of businessmen and promoters from Idaho and several other western states. Shawhan may not have met Smythe personally before the early 1890s, but the two were natural allies. Both promoted Payette Valley development, but Shawhan’s practical banking and mercantile experience complemented and strengthened Smythe’s utopian call for a “Republic of Irrigation.”¹⁸

Shawhan and promoters like him at least lived and worked where they invested. By the social norms of the day, they made money and gained stature at the same time as successful settler-speculators. Most of Smythe’s land agents fit the same category, but others were absentee owners who filed DLA claims on acreage they most likely never visited in person. James V. Parker and his wife, Louisa, for instance, were Vermont natives, born close to each other in the 1840s. James traveled west during his career as a railroad clerk, but later moved to Marietta, Ohio, on the Ohio River. Sometime before Smythe’s irrigation campaign went public and after the Payette Valley water company organized, the Parkers made a deal. Every DLA applicant had to declare under oath that the claim was “not made for the purpose of fraudulently obtaining title to mineral land, timber land, or agricultural land.” Lacking men and means to enforce such rules, no one paid much attention to them.

The Parkers filed separate DLA claims for a total of 920 acres in New Plymouth township. That same year PVIWP paid nearly \$21 an acre for 240 acres of Parker land—\$3 per acre higher than the average of all DLA land transactions in the area. The Parkers sold—or traded, the records don’t say which—another 200 acres in 1895 to his nephew, Coleman S. French, at a discounted rate of \$17.50 per acre. With no investment or overhead, in one year they had cleared \$8500 and still had 480 acres to sell.¹⁹

While Smythe's land agents were at work, the Payette Valley Irrigation and Water Power Company struggled to survive the financial upheavals of the 1890s. Like most private canal companies in the arid West, PVIWP had more ambitions than revenue. Organized by a Denver development company in the late 1880s, it borrowed \$400,000 from Wall Street to dig a ditch five feet deep and twenty-five feet wide that meandered forty miles from the Payette River at Emmett through the sagebrush terraces of the lower valley. No evidence has surfaced tying Smythe directly to PVIWP before 1894, but indirectly his call for revitalizing small-farm democracy through irrigation helped motivate utopian planners and canal investors alike.²⁰

The Panic of 1893 and the depression that followed ruined many undercapitalized companies like PVIWP. Construction stopped when the company couldn't pay its bills or service its debt. It declared bankruptcy in 1894, and its remaining assets fell into the hands of receivers from the New York Security & Trust Company. For the next three years the trustees allowed construction to continue but kept a tight lid on expenses. The result was a poorly managed and maintained canal system that satisfied neither users nor bondholders.

In 1895 B. P. Shawhan took charge as president of the bankrupt company, but he was too busy with managing his other Payette Valley businesses to solve PVIWP's financial woes. He and the other directors turned to Clarence E. Brainard, a Utah real estate agent and canal promoter. While managing some properties in Ogden he had met Smythe and helped him promote the New Plymouth project.²¹

Brainard went to New York in 1897 to negotiate a deal with the canal company receivers. Rather than seek refinancing through the trust company, however, he returned to Payette with an offer to buy up the land holdings of the defunct company himself, provided local farmers bought the canal. His proposal was locally popular, but impractical so long as the national economy was still in depression. Payette Valley farmers lacked the resources and leverage to take up the offer until the financial crisis was over. Not until 1901 were stockholders of New Plymouth Colony able to raise enough capital to settle with the receivers and take control of the canal.²²

With canal development well under way and the designated settlement lands safe from outside speculators, Smythe's agrarian experiment in Payette Valley moved from the planning to promotion stage. In April 1894, during the third National Irrigation Congress in Chicago, Smythe gathered a small group of followers together to discuss how to implement the project. They agreed to charter a joint-stock company that would lead colonists to the promised land. The idea of a new pilgrimage caught the imagination of Edward Everett Hale, famous for his New England stories and sermons. He said that the company should be called New Plymouth, "a name sacred to liberty in the annals of Anglo-Saxon men." With everything in place except formal incorporation, he prepared the first public announcement. It appeared in the March 1895 issue of *Irrigation Age*, and later in an illustrated brochure describing the colony's functions and goals.²³

Smythe "proposed" to make New Plymouth his own home, but several California projects distracted him over the next few years and he never revisited his Idaho experiment. It was left in the hands of local leaders, especially B. P. Shawhan and C. E. Brainard. In 1896 Brainard and five directors from Ogden, Boise, and Payette incorporated the New Plymouth Land & Colonization Company (NPC). Promoters attracted colonists mainly from the ranks of midwestern small farmers, but growth was slow because of the lingering depression and the availability of adjacent land at prices ranging from \$2.50 to \$100 per acre. By 1900 only a few immigrants in New Plymouth Township had followed the colony prescription. They bought company stock in minimum blocks of \$200, which entitled each shareholder to 20 acres of tillable land and a 1-acre town plot. Inspired by Puritan tradition, town planners designed New Plymouth as a horseshoe-shaped residential village and market center, where farmers and their families were to live when not working the surrounding fields and orchards. Though politically secular and socially democratic, culturally it mirrored the values of its Anglo-American Protestant majority.²⁴

Although critics of utopian communities labeled them "socialism" or worse, Smythe's colony in Idaho was too decentralized and too loosely structured to be much more than a brief secular experiment

in community cooperation. Despite the early promises, it didn't work very well in practice. Cooperative farming and living quickly gave way to a more traditional pattern of agricultural development. Payette Valley grew as the national economy picked up after 1896. With productive soil, good weather, cheap and abundant irrigation water, railroad access at Payette, and favorable market conditions, New Plymouth's small farmers entered a "golden age of agriculture" that lasted through World War I.

The French Family and Valley View

Payette Valley was just beginning to feel the surge of settlement when Coleman S. French and his son Fred, along with their wives Abbie and Hazel, arrived early in 1898 to take charge of their 200-acre estate in New Plymouth township. A Vermont native, the elder French—like his Parker relatives—started as a railroad employee and gradually worked upward. After twenty years in Iowa with a subsidiary of the Chicago and Northwestern, he moved to Chicago, the home of his wife Abbie (Southgate), and took up banking and merchandising. By the mid-1890s he was nearly fifty and ready to retire. He must have read Chicago newspaper accounts of Smythe's irrigation crusade during the Third National Irrigation Congress. Certainly he was aware of the Parker family's land claims in the township where the pilgrim farmers of New Plymouth were to settle. Whether he or the Parkers first conceived the idea, doubtless his son Fred and daughter-in-law Hazel were caught up in the irrigation enthusiasm. One can imagine them convincing the older couple that acquiring fertile farmland from the Parkers just three miles from the center of a promising rural development was a good investment, as well as a good place to settle after a career spent in the nation's urban-industrial heartland.

Building a house big enough for two families was the first order of business once they reached their destination. The Frenches lived in tents while local work crews rushed the construction of a two-story Victorian with thirteen large rooms. Inspired most likely by a Midwestern design catalog, the result was a clapboard duplex, with two identical front wings separated by a dormer window above a balustrade.

Because of its location on a rise beside the wagon road leading to Emmett, they called it Valley View. One young reporter, anxious to please the owners, wrote that "Valley View ranch is rightly named for on this elevation one is afforded the best view of the Payette valley of any point we know of." Considering the broad vistas from the surrounding hills, apparently he had not traveled much. But the site was high enough to escape flooding that occasionally spread across the lowlands before dams were constructed on the upper Payette River.²⁵

The French home looked stately from the outside, but with no indoor plumbing, no central heating, a foundation of railroad ties, and newspapers covered with chicken wire and plaster for insulation, it lacked basic creature comforts that would be considered essential forty years later. Wood stoves in a few rooms downstairs kept the families warm in winter. At night they disrobed quickly and slept under thick blankets in the frigid upper rooms. For the New Plymouth area in the 1890s, however, the house was quite roomy and fashionable, a country manor house compared with other dwellings. One town resident in the 1920s, for instance, grew up in a two-room house that her parents had built on the outer leg of the horseshoe. Water piped in from a community well led to a tap above the kitchen sink. If they needed hot water they heated it on the kitchen stove, bathed in a wash tub, and drained waste water into a "covered hole" twenty feet from the house. Another couple with two sons built a two-story farmhouse on the outskirts of town. It was big enough for one family, but when relatives from Minnesota moved in one son was squeezed so much he moved out to the granary.²⁶

By 1910 Valley View had grown from a single residence to a designated community of more than 100 farm families living within a mile or two of the French place. Across the road the French family joined their neighbors to build a one-room community center that alternated as a Grange Hall, church, and schoolhouse. During a school consolidation drive in 1914 the county school board decided to disband the school and "bus" the pupils to New Plymouth on wagons. They hauled the building to town as well, placing it on school grounds in the middle of town. Undeterred, Valley View residents voted to build a new two-



Figure 68 Two Views of Valley View Farmhouse

Built as a duplex in 1898 by Coleman S. French and his son Fred, this two-story clapboard structure had two identical front wings separated by a dormer window above a balustrade. Inspired most likely by a Midwestern design catalog, it had thirteen large rooms, but no indoor plumbing or central heating. Because of its location on a rise beside the wagon road leading to Emmett, the French families who lived here for more than twenty years called it Valley View.

room school across the road just east of the French house on a half-acre parcel the Frenchs donated for the purpose. It remained open until a new consolidation effort forced its closure just before World War II.²⁷

For lighter events in the Valley View community the Frenches entertained in their spacious home, hosting numerous ice cream socials, fundraisers, dances, sledding parties, and lectures on the Chautauqua circuit. Unlike egalitarian westerners, however, Abbie French protected her privacy. A neighbor remembered that “a sign right on the door” kept visitors in the front rooms, away from the back of the house. Perhaps she felt embarrassed by a crippled leg she had to drag along as she walked. But leading an active social life was their way of bringing a *souppçon* of urban culture to rural Idaho.²⁸

While their home was under construction the Frenchs cleared sagebrush and, like other farmers, used it for fuel until their trees matured. With help from the neighbors and more from hired hands, in a few months they had cleared half of their quarter section and planted thousands of apple and prune trees spread over 80 acres. Fruit farmers experimented widely at the turn of the century. Dr. C. M. McBride, for instance, set out over 5,000 trees on his 20 acres south of New Plymouth. Most were apples. To test local soil and climate conditions as well as marketing qualities, McBride and other apple growers planted dozens of varieties no longer cultivated today. Some traveled well on refrigerated boxcars; others bruised too easily to be shipped to auction houses in Kansas City or other commercial markets. By World War I the favorite apples in lower Payette Valley were Jonathans, Winesaps, and Rome Beauties, with Gaynos serving a niche market for pie filling. The clear winner among stone fruit was the Italian prune, a hardy plum that was less susceptible to frost than apples, required less pruning and spraying, held up well to long-distance shipping, and sold well to canneries and dehydrators, especially after the outbreak of war in 1914.²⁹

For twenty years the two French families lived well, with Fred’s income from orchards and row crops supplementing his father’s assets. They remodeled the big house and installed a bathroom and kitchen complete with indoor plumbing that drew water from a deep well on the property. The elder Frenches rose in local prominence, Abbie lead-



Figure 69 Winter View of Valley View Farmhouse

Southwest Idaho winters are normally cold and dry, with only a little more than an inch of moisture. But a light snow followed by a hard freeze can produce a brief but spectacular morning exhibit like these locust trees festooned with frost towering over the Valley View farmhouse in January 1942. Note the small stone smokehouse, built by the French families to cure meats and store canned vegetables. After commercial meat lockers became available in New Plymouth, the Limbaughs tore it down and resurfaced the area as a back yard bordered with salvaged concrete blocks.

ing social functions, helping establish the Congregational Church, and founding a cemetery association; and her husband joining the board of directors for the Farmer's Canal, helping launch a local bank, promoting a railroad spur through town, and serving several years as one of Payette County's representatives in the state legislature. He drove a canvas-topped Overland Runabout, one of the first automobiles in the area. Owning a car in those days was a visible sign of affluence, but until roads were improved the senior French probably used it only on short trips from home to town, or perhaps to the train station at Payette. The first road to Boise was "a fright," according to one early resident. "When it wasn't hub deep in mud, it was in dust." In 1914 over 100 Valley View residents, using draft horses and Fresno scrapers, cut a new grade through the sagebrush growing on the sandy southern hills

north of Caldwell. Praising the work, the local paper's economic analysis might have pleased Tea Party activists today: "Valley View has contributed to Canyon county a new and particularly desirable highway, with no tax burdens consequent." But C. S. French was not yet satisfied. He led the effort to have the State Highway Commission reroute the road from the southern hills to the valley floor. The new road, later designated Highway 30, passed right by his Valley View home.³⁰

The French family fortunes changed abruptly after the death of C. S. French in 1920. In the economic uncertainties that faced fruit farmers in the postwar years, the French heirs turned sour on the New Plymouth "experiment." They sued the directors of the New Plymouth Land and Colonization Company over title to town lots they had felt entitled to as shareholders, but after losing that fight they sold their Valley View ranch for a down payment and a promissory note to a farmer from Oregon, C. H. Whadford, and moved to Boise. Perhaps an auto accident that cost the life of one of Fred and Hazel's children in 1922 had something to do with their disillusion. They were also disgraced by the sad story of their demented uncle Dick, whom it was rumored they kept locked up in the big house before moving him to a small stone smokehouse in the back yard. They left soon after he died.³¹

In contrast to the Frenchs, the Whadfords seemed to do well enough at first, even "sporting a brand new car," as the gossip column in the local paper reported in 1922. Rumors circulated that Whadford money came from her mother, a well-known Pendleton "Madam." But trouble loomed after a few bad years of frost and a gradual downturn of fruit marketing conditions. On Christmas day in 1923, with the temperature at 27 degrees below zero, one neighboring farmer remembered hearing the popping sound of his prune trees splitting down to the core. We "never did make any money after that," he said. Neither did the Valley View farm.³²

With a large family and a growing list of creditors, and with little incentive to keep the place up, the Whadfords hunkered down in the big house when the Great Depression hit. They virtually gave up farming, stopped paying their mortgage to the Frenches, and survived on charity and emergency relief. Untended, many trees died, ditches

filled with weeds, pastures dried up, even the pipes broke that carried well water to the house. After local charity relief ended the Resettlement Administration sustained them for a few months, but in 1936 the French's principal creditor, Oregon Mortgage Company, decided to cut its losses. It foreclosed and forced a sheriff's sale. On 30 January 1937, less than a month before the Limbaughs appeared in Payette looking for a rental, the French farm was sold at auction to the highest—and only—bidder, Oregon Mortgage, for the amount of judgment, \$6,333.79.³³

Resettling the “Old French Place”

Their enthusiasm faded quickly when the Limbaughs saw the “old French place” for the first time. Neglect appeared like neon signposts—unplowed fields; withered crops; dilapidated outbuildings; broken machinery and parts lying about; orchards of dead or dying fruit trees; weeds everywhere. The big ranchhouse badly needed repairs and paint. A large open ditch—one of the laterals from the Farmer's Canal—ran under a porch in the rear yard, but the tenant's wife assured Evelyn it was safe. “Why,” she said, “I raised eight or nine children there and never drowned a one!” That same ditch crossed Highway 30 by a siphon and ran by the old Valley View schoolhouse, where Lillie Peterson remembered having fun with other pupils jumping the ditch during recess³⁴

These were sobering surface indicators, but was the land any good? To get another perspective they drove to Fruitland, fifteen miles away and asked Theodore Reins, son of a prosperous apple grower. A nephew by marriage, the husband of Evelyn's college roommate, Ted was a respected local farmer and a reassuring voice. He thought the farm would prosper under proper management and adequate financing. Hat might supply the former, but would the government supply the latter? Ted—a conservative Republican and Farm Bureau member—had his doubts. He knew only about AAA for large commercial operators and emergency relief for the poor. Few farmers in the spring of 1937 realized the implications of major agrarian policy changes under discussion in the nation's capital.



Figure 70 Kids Playing in a Ditch

Two Limbaugh boys have fun one summer floating down an irrigation ditch in an old hog trough. The ditch was a lateral from the Farmer's Canal that originally ran through the backyard of the Valley View farmhouse. Alarmed by the danger to her young children, soon after moving in Evelyn had her father build a protective fence over the footbridge from the house to the farmstead. Later the ditch was rerouted around the house to a siphon that crossed Highway 30.

Deciding to take the plunge, the Limbaughs returned to La Grande and spent several weeks preparing to move and corresponding with H. H. Eberle, the receiver in charge of the French property. Since they needed an operating farm in order to qualify for a federal loan, in March they sent Eberle a \$50 deposit to option the 32-acre cornfield—the rest of the French land had been rented earlier. Eberle gave them two weeks to come up with half the annual rent of \$10 per acre, the balance payable on 1 August and secured by a crop lien. Back to Payette they came early in April to complete the paperwork with the Resettlement Administration. They borrowed a total of \$532, repayable in annual installments over a four-year period beginning 1 December 1937. The money was to be used for rent, living expenses, equipment and livestock, including two old draft horses and harness, a couple of milk cows, two dozen hens, a cultivator, and enough hay and grain to keep the animals fed until the crops came in. A detailed farm and home management plan accompanied the loan, showing that the Limbaughs were not one of the most desperate cases. They had \$1,542 in assets, including a car, livestock, and accounts receivable from earlier

business. The money borrowed would cover only a little more than a third of their expenses for the coming year. The rest they expected to pay with income from crop and livestock sales, supplemented by \$100 from selling extract, which Evelyn hoped to continue as a sideline. From door-to-door peddling the year before she had earned \$200, almost as much as Hat's income working for WPA in La Grande.³⁵

The Limbaugh loan, modest as it was, typified both the amount loaned and the type of family preferred by RA lenders. Despite the wishes of Rexford Tugwell and other liberals who wanted to address fundamental poverty cases, by 1937 the RA and its successor agency were more comfortable dealing with the "upper crust" of the low-income farm bracket, farmers who had some assets and were lower risks, than those at the very bottom. Financing the less risky was clearly the intent of the Bankhead-Jones Act. Furthermore, the Limbaugh loan might have satisfied the short-term rehabilitation requirements of the Bankhead-Jones proposal but not the long-term ownership provisions. Though conservative critics worried about the competition public loans would pose for private financial institutions, the amount of funding authorized through Bankhead-Jones legislation was only a drop in the financial bucket of the nation's farm need.³⁶

With the paperwork completed at last and the financing in order, the Limbaughs took possession the first week of April. There was a small tenant's cottage on the property, but after the French family left the Whadfords had settled into the big old ranch house and refused to leave when the Limbaughs arrived. It took mortgage company officials several months to get them out; in the meantime the Limbaughs took over the cottage. Evelyn's brother Paul was moving from La Grande to a new pastorate in Pocatello at the same time, so they tried to coordinate the transportation of furniture and other possessions. While Hat worked and Paul's wife, Huldah, waited in the little cottage with her three children, Evelyn and Paul drove to Pocatello in two vehicles, each hauling trailers full of freight. The 400-mile trip took a long day at 30 miles per hour, with the drivers fortified with "No Doze" and the overloaded trailers whipping back and forth in the wind all the way. They made it with only one flat and returned home exhausted the next day.

The season was already late for farming, and none of the preparatory work had been done. Though neighbors and relatives from Fruitland helped when they could, Hat and Evelyn wore themselves out with work and worry. A letter Evelyn wrote the second week in April described one problem, an old iron-tired tractor they had bought for a few dollars from a neighbor. We have “been out cranking on the tractor since before 7 and it isn’t running yet,” she told her parents. “Such a tractor! [Hat’s nephew and brother] Laurence & Andra crank on it a half day at a time. I would sell it or fix up a starter.” Finally it started while she was writing, and she watched her husband set out to disk the corn stalks. He got a “bad kink in his back this a.m. spinning the tractor,” she wrote. “I don’t try to spin it. I just crank. He’s going pretty good down there now. Sure is disgusting to have to do a days work trying to get the old tractor started every time.”³⁷

Needing more reliable power, before the crops were in they invested some of their government money in an old team of draft horses purchased from a retired farmer. “We had to have horses,” Evelyn told me later. “There were so many places a tractor couldn’t go.” Using horses for farm work was already an antiquated practice in much of the United States when the Limbaughs returned to farming. Most large-scale commercial operators had long since exchanged their draft animals for gas-powered tractors and caterpillars. Hydraulic power lifts and tricycle-wheel mounting, low-pressure rubber tires and better gear ratios, more efficient fuel economy and faster speeds—these and other improvements greatly advanced tractor technology over the iron-tired dinosaurs of the teens and twenties. By the thirties over a million tractors had displaced 7 million horses and mules in the United States. Despite their advantages, however, the high conversion cost was a major drawback to the spread of tractors and tractor-dependent implements among marginal farmers. Cultural and environmental factors also conditioned the spread of farm technology. So long as tenant farming prevailed in the Cotton Belt in the South, for instance, mules remained a low-tech but dependable source of motive power. In some parts of the West, animal power lingered longer where sandy soils, narrow valleys, gentle hills, and nearby streams could be utilized for irrigated row

crops and pastureland. Mechanized commercial agriculture was more prevalent in the broad Central Valley of California, the Wheat Belts of the Great Plains and the Palouse, and the Midwestern Corn Belt.³⁸

In the New Plymouth area, where remnant orchards and small, irregular fields placed a premium on maneuverability and precision, draft horses remained popular for farmwork until inexpensive and versatile utility tractors hit the market after World War II. Later the Limbaughs bought a younger pair of Belgians and sent their first team to the glue factory. “Pat” and “Mike” were indispensable for light hauling through muddy ground, mowing, and raking in the hayfields and powering the Mormon derrick for stacking. Well-trained workhorses were the pride of many farmers, but they were slow, sometimes stubborn, prone to illness and accident, and required infinite patience and care. Evelyn remembered riding the single-row cultivator, hour after hour, day after day, straining arms and wrists in driving, delicately backing and turning the horses to keep weeds out of the short rows of corn planted in a narrow field on bottomland next to a drain ditch. She and her husband



Figure 71 Draft Horses

During the 1930s and '40s in Payette Valley, where remnant orchards and small, irregular fields placed a premium on maneuverability and precision, draft horses remained popular for farm work until inexpensive and versatile utility tractors hit the market after World War II. Occasionally farmers used a three-horse team for heavy work, as John Hadley Limbaugh is doing here. To his pair of matching Belgians on the left, he has added a borrowed horse to help pull old prune tree stumps on a neglected 5-acre plot.

took turns on the cultivator, stopping in the late afternoon with just enough sunlight left to unharness, water, curry, and feed the horses before starting the milking and other evening chores.³⁹

Following the FSA cropping and harvesting plan that first year was not as difficult as adjusting to the plan's financial limits and contingencies. Using government funds to purchase used equipment and livestock at auctions whenever they could, the Limbaughs "lived on practically nothing," recalled Evelyn. So broke she couldn't even afford a token gift for her mother, Martha, Evelyn passed it off as a bad joke. You had "quite a birth[day]," she wrote, "and ... I couldn't even send you a card. I want you to quit putting your name on cards and then I can send them back to you next yr. You know how I do! ha." When her parents sent her a dress for her own birthday, she gently chided their extravagance. Since she wore "overalls all the time" for farmwork, she told her mother that "you need money worse than I need clothes."

For income until their sweet corn ripened the Limbaughs built a small dairy herd and sold butterfat to the Payette creamery, but the monthly creamery check averaged only about \$5.00 per cow, barely enough to pay for feed. "They are so disappointed," Martha exclaimed. "I'm sorry for them but they have to learn by experience." The unsold milk made good swill for the hogs, however. "I can just taste the good cured ham we are going to have," Evelyn wrote her mother in June 1937.⁴⁰

Adjusting to contingencies also required considerable sweat, patience, and ingenuity. Finally gaining control of the big farmhouse after the mortgage company forced the Whadfords to vacate, Evelyn found the place full of "bedbugs and everything else." All summer long, whenever they could spare a moment from farming, they cleaned and painted, repaired broken pipes and plumbing fixtures, patched the roof, and chinked the cracks and crevices. They remodeled the lower floors, put lineolium over wooden floors that had been ruined by scrubbing with lye water, restored the parlor (which had been used as a garage), added picture windows, and replaced the sink that piped waste water to the irrigation ditch with a septic system. Family and friends dropped in occasionally to help, but cash was always in short supply. For \$2.00 at one auction they bought an old cast-iron kitchen stove and installed

it for both cooking and warmth. It was “well worth the money,” she told her folks, and so big and heavy that “I bet it stays there for I think it weighs 2 tons.” With “a reservoir, water coils, & a water jacket too,” she exclaimed, “we ought to have plenty of [hot] water someplace.”⁴¹

The work was exhausting, but there was no time or money to relax. “We didn’t ever go to a show; didn’t ever go anyplace” for fun during the first couple of years, Evelyn recalled later, with only slight exaggeration. As Evelyn’s sister Olive exclaimed when she and her ten-year-old daughter, Doris, arrived for a stay that summer, “Here we are at Evelyn’s milling around like bees trying to do dozens of things at once. My head is in a whirl.” Olive’s disorientation had other causes, however. She had just lost her husband to ALS, Lou Gehrig’s disease, and the future looked bleak. Federal aid to the elderly was still just a dream, and state and local assistance had dried up years before. Idaho offered few prospects for unemployed widows, but she still held an Oregon teaching credential. Wistfully, she thought it would be nice to stay in the roomy farmhouse with her sister’s family, but financial distress weighed heavily on her. “I must work until I’m too old to work,” she told her stepmother. For a few weeks she worked as a cook’s helper on one of Andy Little’s ranches near Emmett, and later that fall she and Doris moved to Ontario after landing a job teaching primary school at a one-room schoolhouse at Cairo Junction.⁴²

One trip the Limbaughs took to move Evelyn’s parents illustrates the hurried pace of their lives during the hectic summer of 1937. Anxious to be closer to their family, Edward and Martha Mortimore waited with growing impatience in LaGrande while their children organized the move to a small house Evelyn had rented for them in Ontario. Just west of the Snake River, the town was only twenty miles from New Plymouth but still in Oregon. Living there was necessary to qualify Edward for his pension from the state highway department, the only funds the elders had to live on except for the few dollars Paul managed to send them each month.

As moving time approached, Evelyn factored in the contingencies. If some extra money could be found and the weather cooperated they would start for La Grande, she explained, but they first needed a dollar

to grease their pickup. The tires were also old and worn but couldn't be replaced without more money, so if they failed "it will just be too bad. They may go thru ok, tho." She tried to "borrow tires" for the trailer they would bring along to haul furniture, but when that effort failed she went ahead anyway.⁴³ Then came the marching orders to her parents:

We will have to leave here one morning after milking (about 6) and be in La Grande at 8 a.m. your time. Load up and get back in time to milk about 7 p.m. So you will have to be all ready.... We will try & not rush you packing but when we get ready to move we will have to move.⁴⁴

Move they did on a hot day in July, with Evelyn and Hat setting the pace in a well-worn farm pickup pulling a stock trailer piled high with household possessions and a few boards they couldn't afford to leave behind, and Edward and Martha following in their old Ford coupe with a rumble seat crammed to overflowing. Family caravans like theirs were common in the late 1930s. The West was filled with poor migrants from the Dust Bowl. But the mythical loads were less fortunate than the Mortimores and their relatives. The Limbaughs made the 300-mile round trip without incident and still got in two milkings the same day. Edward, the preacher, must have thought it miraculous.

From Tenant to Owner

After six months of hard labor on a 24/7 schedule, the Limbaughs finally reached the end of the 1937 harvest—exhausted but not discouraged. Without government help they could not have started farming that year, nor could they have survived financially. Their expenses added up to more than their income that first season, but that was acceptable with the government regulators so long as their clients made "progress."

Measuring the progress of those who received assistance meant intruding into their daily lives. FSA officials kept a close eye on their clients. In the Payette Valley, supervisors from the Payette office spent

as much time in the field as they did in the office. They checked each farmer's actual operations against his plans. They visited housewives, asking questions and probing into what many considered their private affairs. They carefully monitored family finances, countersigned personal checks, and required each client to obtain written permission before selling crops or animals. The mountain of paperwork and the obligatory trips to the Payette office only added to the burdens each participant felt.⁴⁵

The Limbaughs and most borderline farmers in the same situation were understandably ambivalent. They were desperate for financial assistance, but shamed by their inability to fend for themselves. Evelyn's attitude was typical:

As soon as we went in [to the Payette office] they started asking us how we spent our money. They had a form to tell them how we spent every cent we had. This was infringing on our private rights because we didn't have anything. And you hate to say "I don't have this and I don't have that." Anything that would reveal your poverty and your inability to take care of yourself was the revolting thing about it. [We resented] the prying; they wanted to know what we had and we had nothing. What business was it of theirs; if they wanted to help us let them help us. We felt we had sense enough if we had help to go ahead and handle it, but we were treated ... as if we didn't have sense enough to handle anything.⁴⁶

Perhaps reflecting her own ambivalence, Evelyn contradicted herself in a later assessment: "We didn't feel like we were too closely supervised. There were some things we didn't like about the system, but we didn't feel like they were imposing on us. We were so thankful that we were getting a chance to do something on our own."⁴⁷

If government officials told farmers what to do, they thought it was for their own good. Progressive New Dealers like Rexford Tugwell and Henry Wallace wanted farm rehabilitation as well as relief. Their goal was to end the root causes of rural poverty by modernizing

650 August
(Month)

¹ Totals of columns 2, 3, and 4 should equal total for column 1.

The Farm Security Administration required every borrower to keep detailed income and expense records in a “Family Farm Record Book” provided for the purpose. Record-keeping was a new experience to most small farmers. To lessen their anxiety, the FSA trained young college graduates and sent them periodically to the farmer’s home to provide assistance. This page from Evelyn’s 1937 book illustrates the level of detail expected.

farm operations. They rejected the tired old myths about rugged individualism and self-reliance that had prevailed since the early Republic. To break old habits and attitudes, to “escape the prison of their traditions” as one official termed it, FSA planners believed it was necessary to change attitudes through education. If small farmers wanted help from the government they would have to follow the rules. An FSA grant program spelled out the overall purpose in two sentences of the “pledge of cooperation”: “I, the undersigned ... have applied for, or have already received, a grant or grants from the Farm Security Administration. In recognition of this assistance, and in order to further the economic welfare of myself and my family on the farm I am now occupying, I shall ... perform the following work thereon...”⁴⁸

Despite their reservations the Limbaughs had no choice. Once obligated they had to stay with the program until they could pay off their debt to the FSA. “They set it up for five years,” Evelyn recalled. “If you made an honest effort they would work with you.” That was the common experience of some eighty other Payette County families who participated. Almost everyone was buried under a mountain of debt that got higher every year. Each spring they went back to the Payette office to borrow more money and fill out forms, renew their mortgages, and pay a little of the interest due but nothing on the principal. It was a vicious cycle that got better only when farm commodity prices began to rise.⁴⁹

Keeping records of every dollar spent on farm or household expenses was hard enough, but preparing a detailed farm plan for the coming year was harder. “I had never been on a farm, so I didn’t know anything about ... how to keep farm records,” Evelyn told me later. Like many farm women, she kept the record books while her husband did the farming. “You could hardly ever find a woman who had made a farm plan. You just didn’t plan ahead. You planned a garden but you didn’t know how many quarts of this or that you would can. This is the sort of thing they wanted down on that sheet of paper...!” she exclaimed. But she and her neighbors had help that first year. To assist with recordkeeping, FSA trained young women and sent them to the farmer’s home. “We didn’t know what to expect from FSA, but they helped us

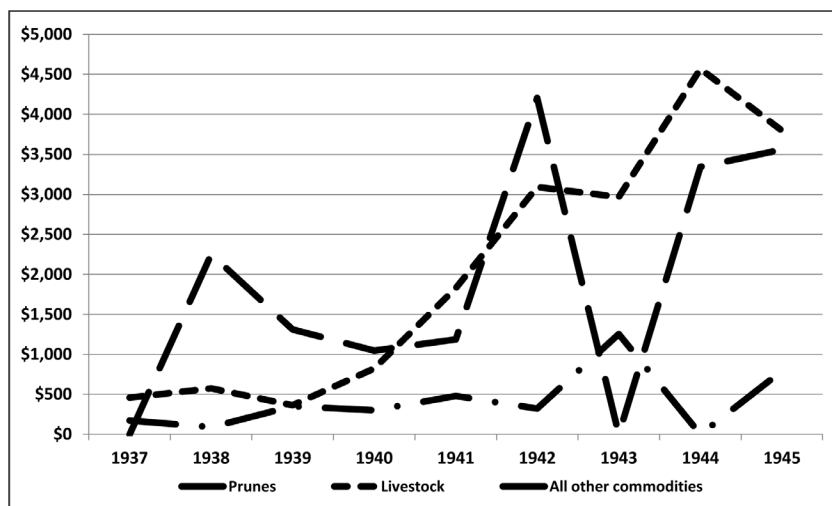


Figure 73 Values of Commodities Produced on the Limbaugh Farm

with it.” Gradually they learned what to expect, and at the same time learned how to plan ahead. From the progressive standpoint that was progress.⁵⁰

Despite their grouching, many small farmers voted for FDR at election time. The New Deal was certainly not an economic revolution, as many critics claimed, but it did help shift rural America from the Republican to the Democratic column. Looking back over the hard times, Evelyn said, “Roosevelt was a good man for the farmers in those days, and the farmers appreciated it ...; if it hadn’t been for him helping farmers we would never [have resumed farming] and I can’t predict what we would have done.” Ironically, American small farmers got more of a boost from mobilization and war than from New Deal domestic programs. The national economy recovered quickly after Hitler attacked Western Europe in 1940. The rush to rearm triggered a huge jump in domestic demand for everything essential to war, including food and fiber.⁵¹

Prune sales on the Limbaugh farm illustrate war’s effects on domestic food prices. By 1937 only 12 acres of aging prune trees remained of the 80 acres of prunes and apples planted by the French family at the

turn of the century. A canning company controlled the prune orchard when the Limbaugh family took over the French place in 1937, but the next year they added it to their lease.

Despite the lingering depression, 1938 was a good year for prunes. The Limbaughs shipped over 3,700 half bushel baskets to the packing-house that fall and received \$2,250 in gross sales. As the accompanying chart shows, from 1938 to 1943 they made more money on prunes than any other commodity. Fortunately, they had built up enough livestock by 1943 to offset the prune crop failure that year. With the uncertainties in weather, prices, and marketing conditions, farming was a fickle business.

Labor is the Achilles' heel of every commercial farming operation. A single household—even a married couple with young children—might be able to raise crops and feed livestock on a small farm without outside help, but disaster looms without an adequate labor supply at harvest time. On the Limbaugh farm the crucial months were August and September. Exchanging work with neighbors rather than paying wages was common practice among small farmers during the haying season, but not if a large crop had to be harvested all at once. Evelyn's books for 1938—their first full year on the farm—record the labor costs for harvesting corn and prunes. They hired nine men for the corn crew—all neighbors with farms of their own—and paid them 25 cents an hour for a total of \$114.63. Prunes were harder to harvest, but migrant workers were still available before expanding war industries absorbed them all. The Limbaughs paid out \$337.50 in pickers' wages, amounting to 6 cents a half bushel. Though gross income for 1938 was \$2,281 higher than the year before, operating expenses still exceeded revenue by \$913. Their only option was to go back to Payette, hat in hand, to borrow more money from the FSA.⁵²

Farm Security not only loaned money for operating costs but also for equipment and other capital expenses. The Limbaughs bought a manure spreader one year and built a small barn the next—with labor donated by Hat's father, John W. Limbaugh, an experienced carpenter. In addition, FSA loans could be used to pay annual leases, but not to purchase real estate. When they first moved onto the Payette Valley



Figure 74 Buckraking

Late in 1938, with FSA approval, the Limbaughs bought the used buck rake shown in operation here. After mowing, alfalfa hay dried on the ground until the moisture content was low enough to allow raking, either in windrows for bailing or shocks for stacking. Though bailing had significant advantages over stacking, the equipment required was too expensive for most small farmers in the 1930s and '40s. They used buck rakes instead, which raised and dumped partly dried hay into shocks that were later forked by hand onto wagons and hauled to a stack site.

farm the Limbaughs “were only thinking about getting back to farming,” Evelyn explained. They had no money and no intention of buying the property until an ill-mannered opportunist came by one day late in 1939 and ordered them off the land, claiming he had just purchased it. Evelyn was apoplectic. “Well I got Daddy out of the field and we put our things on and we drove ourselves over to Boise to find out about that,” she told me many years later. R. H. Davidson, the agent for Oregon Mortgage Company, was sympathetic. He calmed them

down and said the man had only made inquiries, not signed a contract. But the Limbaughs were vulnerable. “These [foreclosed] places were cheap,” she recalled, “and the mortgage companies were selling them for the mortgage. And if somebody came in and offered \$1000 more than the mortgage, they were nothing but a business firm, and they would take it we were afraid.”

Like generations of squatters before preemption laws, they stood to lose any improvements on land that could be sold to a smart speculator without their knowledge. But Davidson had visited the property himself and knew the work his clients had put in over the past three years. He thought they were a good credit risk. When Evelyn said, “We’ll sure buy it if you’ll make it in terms we can buy it,” he said, “You write your own terms.” With Davidson’s help they drew up papers offering \$6,200 for the French place, payable in ten annual installments at 6 percent interest. It seemed a lot to take on while they were still struggling to pay back Farm Security, but they were determined not to fall victim to a greedy speculator. After a few weeks of nervous waiting they learned they were landowners from a letter of acceptance dated 6 February 1940. With a gleam in her eye Evelyn told me later: “When this guy came back who said he owned it, we said ‘you don’t own it and you’re never going to own it!’”⁵³

In hindsight, the presumptive speculator did the Limbaughs a favor by precipitating the change from tenant to owner. It was an optimum time for buying land, when the country was still deep in recession and farm property values the lowest in decades. Just four months later the German army marched triumphantly through Paris and America woke from its isolationist slumber. Only Britain and the Atlantic Ocean stood between the Nazi dictator and the American shoreline. Roosevelt called for all-out mobilization to make the United States the “arsenal of democracy,” and the industrial heartland, nearly moribund after a decade of depression, eagerly responded. Almost overnight the economy rebounded, unemployment disappeared, factories expanded, seedy cities grew to busy metropolises teeming with life. With an al-

most unlimited market for food and fiber at home and abroad over the next six years, farmers reaped the benefits of insatiable demand. The price for good farmland rose like an untethered balloon. Along with most of their small farm neighbors, the Limbaughs still faced a mountain of debt. But owning a hunk of Payette Valley land that seemed to rise in value every year helped offset the daily operating headaches and financial worries that came with running a small farm.

The Mortimores in Pocatello and Beyond

Moving from the scenic highlands of La Grande to a gritty Idaho railroad town gave Paul Mortimore new opportunities to serve God and country. Whether or not he anticipated the consequences, this Oregon-born evangelist reached the highpoint of his career during his years in Pocatello.

Revival and Survival

During the prewar years in Pocatello, Paul struggled to earn a living, but personal financial troubles were secondary to the Lord's Work. There was plenty of work ahead. Soon after his arrival in the spring of 1937 he planned a fall revival, his first big campaign after moving to this "tough, ungodly" railroad town, where "people pay no attention to church."

He may have had second thoughts about moving from an established church in a pleasant ranching community to a struggling pastorate in a windy transient town, but his faith sustained and strengthened him in hard times. Faith, however, was no substitute for hard work. Unlike some of his mystical and sometimes morbid relatives, he was a methodical problem-solver—and one with a Calvinist determination to succeed. He believed that the Lord helped those who helped themselves.

In the early 1920s Paul had been a Chautauqua organizer and crowd warmer. He was a fascinating story-teller. "I recall that he knew some good stories, stories which could not be told in Chapel," said a friend much later. In the pulpit he told inoffensive but didactic anecdotes, either from a prepared text or drawn from a pocket-sized notebook he always carried. A sermon called "The Importance of the Bible," for example, drew on a clever conundrum from William Lyon Phelps, a 19th-century literary critic: "I believe knowledge of the Bible without a college course is more valuable than a college course without knowledge of the Bible."¹

Once he had an audience he knew how to keep it interested, but his Pocatello revival plans went awry even before the campaign opened in September. To attract attention he spent all the money he could raise renting a huge tent. It was not enough, as he explained in a letter to his parents:

We got it up and the folks were getting their things ready for the program, when suddenly there came a blast of wind that just tore the whole end of the top to pieces. If it had been a good tent, it would have held, but being so old, I knew there was no use to patch it even, so we simply took it down. There was all that work and expense for nothing. Well, we have been trying to get started in this little cracker box, but it is pretty hopeless. We are trying to get a school auditorium just two blocks from here, and I rather think we may be able to. But it has sure been discouraging.²

Money problems at home added to Paul's frustrations that fall and winter. As the sole provider for a family of five in a troubled economy without a social safety net, he worried about the future if something happened to him. Private insurance helped, but it did not ease the monthly pocketbook pain. His wife, Huldah, still unhappy with her husband's determination to repay an old loan that bankruptcy had wiped off the books, had difficulty raising three children on what was left of his modest salary. "By the time we pay old lady B_____ \$45 every month, \$25 rent, 4 life insurance policies, there isn't much left,"

she complained. "A tythe [sic] to the church has to come out, too."³

To make ends meet Huldah grew produce in the family garden, and Paul hunted deer in the nearby hills. His son David did his part in the late Depression years by earning 50 cents a week selling magazines. When he was fourteen his father took him on his first forage for wild game. "We got three nice ducks," Paul wrote his folks. [David] ... gets a big kick out of helping me hunt. By next hunting season he will be able to have lots of fun."⁴

Like his fraternal brothers in the American Legion, Paul defended game hunting as both a civil right and a patriotic duty. For Legionnaires, "Be Prepared" meant be ready to fight the next war. But putting food on the table in hard times meant more to Paul than any ideology. David later observed that in the Depression venison was the only meat they could afford.⁵

Besides the venison and vegetables, the Mortimores found other ways to cut living expenses. When school started that fall Huldah sent two of her children off to school in mended clothes, and the third in a homemade dress. At Christmas the family relied mostly on charity, as Paul admitted with some embarrassment to his parents:

Dear folks. I hate to write this letter without being able to put a hundred dollar bill in it, but it just seems for some reason all my finances are on the wrong side. It is surely miserable to be broke all of the time.... But so sorry not to be able to do something [sic] for those we love. We simply have sent nothing to anybody. Got the children a few things. One of the families here had two nice little red rockers in good condition their girls had outgrown, so I am painting them over for our girls. They are like new now. Another had a nice doll bed we are painting up, and I managed to get a doll buggy at a bargain sale. We with some smaller toys, the children will be happy I am sure. I expect some of the folks here will give them things too. We are invited out for dinner to a nice family's home. Hadn't made any plans, so it came in just right.⁶

Tight money during the “Roosevelt Recession” of 1937–39 did not delay the advent of Christian broadcasting in Pocatello. Though Paul was still repaying the losses from the failed La Grande radio venture two years earlier, he was determined to prove the power of radio as an evangelistic tool. In September 1937 he inaugurated a series of weekly sunrise services, broadcast live on a local station. How far the signal reached depended on atmospheric conditions, but he hoped they would carry clear across the state. “I hope you can get to where there is a good radio once in a while and hear our morning service,” he wrote his parents in Ontario. “I think it is going to be fine to be on the air regularly. Don’t know how it will work out yet, but I feel sure it is a fine opportunity.”⁷

Success in radio broadcasting provided the spiritual spark that the abortive tent meeting lacked earlier. By December 1937 the Central Christian bulletin, which Paul typed and mimeographed himself, proclaimed that “Our morning service, broadcast regularly over station KSEI, is reaching thousands ... each Sunday.” Radio outreach paid dividends in higher church attendance, better funding, and greater visibility for Pocatello’s innovative evangelism.⁸

Serving the public came at a price, both to his family and his own health. His time at home diminished as work and travel increased, straining relations with his wife and keeping him away from most of the important events in the lives of his children. By 1938 he was already complaining of stomach trouble and nerves “so shot that I can’t swallow my food.” The malady may have been aggravated by his first plane ride, which he took at the request of a young couple who wanted to be married over the skies of Pocatello.⁹

Building a New Church

Despite the stress, in 1938 Paul took advantage of his growing community stature to launch a capital campaign to replace the “little cracker box” that had served First Christian Church congregations in Pocatello since the 19th century. With the economy barely breathing it was a tough time to raise money. The church lacked a building fund, and even if financing could be found the congregation was unwilling to

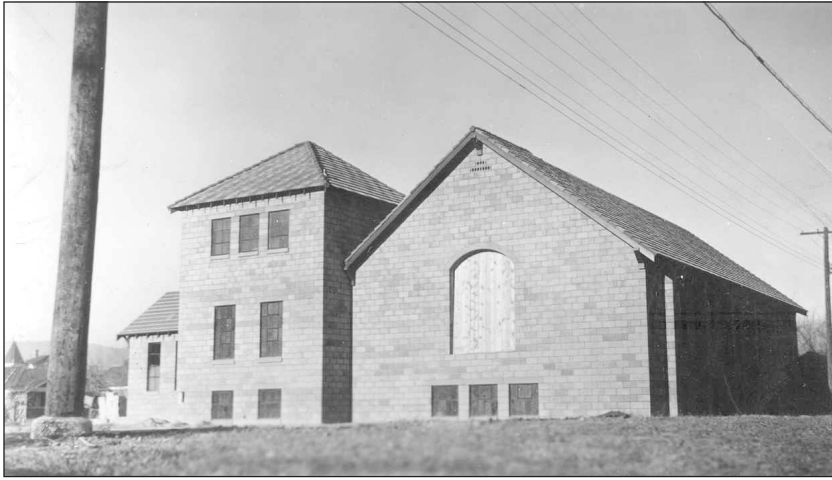


Figure 75 Pocatello Christian Church

While the Depression still gripped the country Paul Mortimore, pastor of Pocatello's First Christian Church, launched a building campaign to replace the "little cracker box" that had stood since the 19th century. To save money he designed the structure himself and relied on volunteers for most of the labor. They worked intermittently when materials were available. It was dedicated in the spring of 1940 and completed soon after.

take on a huge burden of debt. Paul went ahead anyway. After fifteen years in the pulpit this was his chance to build a new church from the ground up. With his own drafting instruments he designed a larger chapel with separate offices and meeting rooms and then led a volunteer effort to build it out of concrete, cinderblock, and wood. For building materials he solicited any businessman he could pin down for donations, and he acquired much of the material free or at cost. Volunteers from his own congregation supplied most of the labor for basic construction and carpentry work. Crews worked intermittently when materials were available, often at night after regular employment, with churchwomen providing refreshments.

By the summer of 1939 the project had broken ground and much of the foundation work had been completed, but the pay-as-you-go approach kept progress at a snail's pace. The strong Mormon influence in southeast Idaho might have discouraged most evangelical Protestant fundraisers, but Paul knocked on any door to raise money. His

community outreach paid dividends. Later he could boast that there was more Mormon than non-Mormon money in the Pocatello Christian Church.¹⁰

For nearly a year Paul and his crews labored to complete the job. Early in 1940, with only finishing details left, the strain he felt showed clearly in a letter he penned to the Mortimores in Ontario:

We are making pretty good progress on the building now, and I am at it early and late. Will have to work extra hard now to get the rest of the money needed to complete payment.... I surely do hope this is all ended this spring.... Hope to get the furnace and heating equipment in soon. That will be a big help as we can then finish the painting and varnishing. It is too cold now.... [I] just can't make the hours go far enough for everything. If I put this thing over successfully it means a lot. Can't let down now.¹¹

A capacity crowd attended the opening service in the still-unfinished church on Sunday morning, 14 April 1940. It was a modest structure by modern urban standards, yet its completion, while the Depression still lingered, was a considerable accomplishment. A Salt Lake businessman applauded the feat in a congratulatory note: "Knowing the majority of your people are in rather modest circumstances, I know the building represents a real achievement."¹²

Although donations had paid for much of the work, Paul and the church fathers had to arrange a last-minute loan to complete construction. Following the first service, the pastor and chief promoter, exhilarated but also exhausted, wrote his parents: "We are all worn out ... [The building is] all paid for except what the loan will cover before we get the loan, so I have my hands full still. I hope the folks don't quit now, and leave the rest for me to do alone.... I am terribly tired.... I've got to have a few days rest pretty soon...."¹³

Leisure is a luxury to a dedicated preacher. Paul caught a few moments of rest over the next few weeks, but supervising the last stages of construction kept him busy until summer. In July, with school out and many parishioners vacationing, Paul took his family to Ontario to

visit relatives, then returned to Pocatello and prepared for his first visit to Yellowstone National Park.

Riding back with them from western Idaho was Paul's sister Evelyn. She was "really tired" after three hard years of farming and had been persuaded both by Paul and their mother Martha that a relaxing trip would settle her nerves. With an older orphan girl staying at the farm to help Martha take care of the two Limbaugh children while Evelyn was away, her husband, Hadley, offered no objections.¹⁴

In a famous passage, John Muir at the turn of the 20th century invited Yellowstone tourists to "climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees." His evocative prose lulled visitors into thinking they were more dangerous than the wild animals they might encounter. "The bears," he insisted, "are gentle now, finding they are no longer likely to be shot." But Yellowstone forty years later was far different from the halcyon days before autos and good roads. America was just beginning to awaken from the Great Depression, and millions flocked to the hinterlands with all their civilized trappings and a seemingly endless supply of food in convenient packages. The bears had never had it so good, as the Mortimores soon discovered.¹⁵

Paul thought he knew how to handle bears. After finding a good campsite near Yellowstone Lake and setting up a tent, Paul took David fishing while the rest of the family finished unpacking and relaxed. That evening, after a hearty meal around the campfire, Paul hung the fish on a line ten to twelve feet high between two trees and then "got a pile of rocks" ready just in case they had night visitors. With the two Mortimore daughters tucked safely in the car, Paul, Huldah, David, and Evelyn settled down for the night in the tent. They were just beginning to doze when they "heard a racket" outside. Two huge grizzlies had arrived for a midnight feast. A flashlight spotlighted the first one biting into a tin of food left on the camp table. The second was "standing on his hind legs nipping fish off the line," Evelyn said later. Paul grabbed some rocks and started throwing and shouting at the bear with the tin. Another camper pursued the fish-eating bear, who came straight toward Huldah and Evelyn. Their screams, if not the rocks, startled the



Figure 76 Burning the Mortgage

The Pocatello First Christian Church was a modest structure by modern urban standards, yet its completion, while depression still lingered, was a considerable accomplishment. Although donations had paid for much of the work, Paul and the church fathers had to arrange a last-minute loan to complete construction. When it was paid in full they stood at the altar one Sunday to burn the mortgage. Paul is second from left.

intruder. At the last minute he veered away, with Paul and other campers running behind, keeping up a furious clamor for a quarter-mile. Evelyn was glad to get back to farming, vowing “never [to] go back to Yellowstone again and sleep out.” Paul had little time to reflect on the episode. He had to get back to the unfinished business in Pocatello.¹⁶

From Local Preacher to National Chaplin

Paul’s ministry continued to grow in the prewar years, and so did the demands on his time. As soon as church construction ended he persuaded church fathers to remodel the small rented house that served as a parsonage. By Christmas 1940 it was “about finished,” he wrote, though he was not happy with some of the work. He would have done it himself had time permitted, but community service was a fulltime obligation. Weddings, funerals, sermons, speeches, radio talks, and practice for musical events filled his schedule, leaving little time or

money for the ordinary tasks of daily life. That seemed a small sacrifice for doing the Lord's Work and "living by the power of God," as his biblical namesake told the Christians at Corinth. Faith and trust in God's word are underlying themes in Paul's correspondence and sermon notes. Despite the evil he saw around him at home and abroad, he never doubted the power and promise of the gospel.¹⁷

Paul's theodicy recognized evil as a necessary consequence of free will. The road of life had many branches, but only one led to salvation. The act of choosing, however, by definition required intellectual maturity and consciousness. Theodicy inevitably has to confront the problem of reconciling the spiritual vision of divine goodness with the suffering and death of innocents, as Voltaire lamented after the horrendous Lisbon earthquake of 1755. Like so many traditionalists of his generation, Paul felt that the deeper mysteries rested in God's will, beyond human comprehension. A hasty letter to Ontario noting a pending funeral, for example, mentions only the need to conduct a service for two parents killed in a car wreck—"maybe three if the baby dies tonight"—without inviting any reflective response from his deeply religious parents. Nor was he given to pondering the fate of a "young fellow" evangelist from Kentucky whom he had once "rescued" from the Pocatello jail. An Appalachian missionary later reported that the young man had "finally worked his way back east ... got married, was dissatisfied with his wife, got a church which paid him so little that he got in debt, and finally went back into the world," and then "robbed a pay-roll office, ran with the money, and was shot through the head."¹⁸

Mysterious indeed were the ways of the Lord, as Paul learned on a cross-country train trip to the American Legion convention in September 1941. "Here I go to New York!" he exclaimed as the journey began. He told his parents he was "thrilled to pieces" for the chance to see the nation's capital and its largest cities for the first time. "I am beginning to think I have a blessing for travel," especially if it could be turned into a paid vacation. Hired to escort a "deranged engineer and ex-service man," a practicing Catholic who had "lost his bearings," Paul took charge of him in Pocatello and loaded him into a Pullman compartment for the eastward journey. He "prays a lot" but was "very

irrational and very determined to get off the train,” Paul reported. After “several wrestling matches” the minister thought “maybe he is praying for strength to give me a licking!” But handling the psychotic engineer was no laughing matter. In the middle of the night, while crossing Nebraska, he crashed through the compartment window and jumped at 80 miles per hour. Paul cut his head in a futile effort to stop him. Incredibly the man survived. After an emergency stop and a rescue operation that ended in an Iowa hospital, Paul caught another train and continued his trip to Indianapolis. New York and Washington, D.C., would have to wait.¹⁹

In recent years the hint of scandal has tainted the reputation of some prominent military figures, politicians, and “televangelists,” but Paul never seemed distracted by temptation. Fortified by the courage of his convictions, he had felt compelled to preach “ever since I was a little boy” listening to Free Methodist sermons, as he once told his sister Olive. In the early 1920s he had moved beyond Holiness teachings by joining the Christian Church, yet he still felt the tug of Sanctification. For Free Methodists, Nazarenes, and other true believers, it promised “sudden, thorough, permanent and privately perceived mortal and spiritual perfection.”²⁰

Paul practiced what he preached, even though he occasionally annoyed some listeners with witticisms that amused him more than his audience. High-church Methodists were favorite targets. His book of handwritten anecdotes includes this little jest, doubtless used more than once to liven up a service: “Glad to have some Methodists in the Christian church. They would probably be glad to have some Christians in the Methodist Church!”

After hearing him repeatedly joke that “I was a Methodist until the Lord saved me and I became a Christian,” a few colleagues asked him to stop, but he was oblivious to their entreaties. Nor were women spared, especially wives. “We have a joint bank account,” one gag began. “I put money in, she draws it out!” A young preacher meeting him for the first time was startled when Paul, in an avuncular tone, offered this bit of advice: “Now one thing I want you to remember when you are pastor of this church, all women are crazy. Leave them

alone....” He said it with a smile, but his protégé never forgot the message.²¹

In a patriarchal age Paul’s attitude toward women is understandable. His busy schedule kept him away from home most of the time, and when he did come home he had little to say. Huldah never knew much about his work. Nor did they talk about Paul’s male friends and colleagues, who were much better informed than his wife about his views on business, politics, and social issues of the day. Though money remained a taboo topic between them, Paul had a stubborn streak that made it difficult to reconcile domestic differences. “Frankly, very few people could tell Paul how to run his life,” a close friend reminisced much later. Huldah put it more bluntly: Paul “made up his mind and stuck to it regardless.”²²

Outside the family circle Paul’s steadfast faith and singular focus represented certainty and reassurance in an uncertain age. One admirer wrote gushingly that “I live over the good old prayer meetings that you never let grow dull, your songs between prayers and happy testimony helped me many times. Dear old Daddy Mortimores prayer raised my spirit to realms above.” As his oratorical skills and musical talent became better known he was called on ever more frequently to pray or speak or preside at community events beyond the boundaries of his own congregation. His list of “some sermon subjects” in a personal notebook showed that he was not afraid to tackle debatable issues like “Minimum Wage,” “Housing the Poor,” or other secular topics of the day. When the Idaho Department of Welfare sought his counsel on behalf of poor children in Pocatello, Paul started a campaign to organize a summer camp for underprivileged youth. Joining the local Rotary Club gave him a new platform to promote child welfare. It also brought him into contact with Pocatello’s business and educational elite. Soon he was chairman of the Community Children’s Welfare Council and one of the planners advocating the establishment of a nursery school on the Idaho State College campus.²³

In a conservative state his outspoken views on politics and society pleased more listeners than they offended. Ever since the Scopes trial he had been upset by the notion of men descending from apes. No

one who believed in the literal truth of the Bible could accept the idea of evolution. He often spoke out against “worldly science teachers” for undermining the faith of Christian students. Nor were politicians spared if he thought they threatened fundamental Christian values. A lifelong prohibitionist, Paul felt that President Roosevelt was “bad for the country” because he had ended the ban on beer. His son David said he was probably the only kid in La Grande with an Alf Landon button.²⁴

Religion and politics came closer together during Paul’s ministry in Pocatello. He was on the right side of history as the nation belatedly woke up to the fascist threat. The Depression ended quickly in the rush to mobilize America’s military and industrial potential. With America heading toward war, Paul’s American Legion connections increased his public visibility and outreach. His outspoken views on national defense won friends among the local political and military elite. They reciprocated by turning to him when they needed civilian volunteers for patriotic service. Despite the additional time away from his family, he could not well refuse. Indeed, he was eager to assume an ever larger role in public life—not as politician, but as spiritual leader.

Along the spiritual path it would not hurt to make a little money as well. Paul had strong business instincts, but lacked the resources, the time, and the luck to turn an idea into a profitable venture. He was still paying off the La Grande debt when he started up a little wholesale business in Pocatello supplying stationary and stencils to a few Christian churches in the Pacific Northwest. He was “a stickler for detail, a good organizer and administrator,” one of his colleagues told me later, but his “Mail Order Church Supply Company” suffered during the early years of the war. It picked up again later, but remained only a sideline to his ministry.²⁵

Profit was secondary to patriotism during the early years of the war. As a Legionnaire, Paul rose quickly, both as spiritual leader and military spokesman. His election to the post of state chaplain in 1941 provided a stepping stone to larger responsibilities. Encouraged by his friend Henry Dworshak, Republican congressman and later U.S. senator, he served a year as coordinator of Bannock County’s Civilian

Defense Council. The following year Idaho's governor commissioned him as a major in the Idaho Volunteer Reserves. Assigned to command the Bannock County Battalion, he was "to serve without pay or allowances." Paul took pride in the sinecure and dressed the part, even though he had to buy his own uniform. He held the post for a year but spent little time on the job. In January 1943 a terse letter from the state commander warned him that his organization would be "disposed of" unless he made "an extra effort" to "recruit this company to strength immediately." A month later Paul wrote that he had fully complied, but military officials were not assured. That summer the guard commander in Boise honorably discharged the major of the Bannock County volunteers "for the convenience of the State."²⁶

As a Legion volunteer Paul was perhaps more motivated and certainly more successful than in his job with the state militia. In the spring of 1942, the darkest days of the war for the United States, several standing committees of Legionnaires met at their national headquarters in Indianapolis, the first of three meetings they normally held each year. Paul arrived by train to represent the Idaho delegation, but on what committee isn't clear. Committee members were appointed by their chairs; national officers were elected at the annual Legion convention by delegates from each state. Each step in the process required campaigns to achieve new honors. On 7 December 1941—the date that will "live in infamy"—Paul had written to the Legion headquarters in Indianapolis. The letter has not survived, but his frustration at not having served overseas during World War I must have been aggravated by Pearl Harbor. He wanted to do something at the national level. Working in "some government project" would help the country, but "I am afraid that if I ever quit preaching I would never get back to it," he told his parents. Having just been elected Idaho state chaplain, he went to Indianapolis in part to promote his candidacy for national chaplain.²⁷

Paul made friends at Legion headquarters, but he had to be nominated before he could be elected to a national office, and his nomination depended on the support of the Idaho delegation. At the state convention in August, his Idaho supporters reelected him state chaplain and "voted to run me for National Chaplain!" he exulted in a family

letter. Legionnaires held their annual convention the following month in Kansas City. Paul arrived early and lobbied hard. Assured of backing from California and the Pacific Northwest delegations, he anticipated the outcome in a quick note home: "All going well ... I will be elected National Chaplain tomorrow unless something very unusual happens." Nothing did. The next day Paul won the cherished position, the capstone of his career.²⁸

After the convention the new Legion officer had a lot to learn before delivering the invocation at Arlington National Cemetery on Armistice Day—his most important task as national chaplain. Frank Samuel, the national adjutant and Legion CEO, instructed him on protocols and policies for official visits. The details were exhausting. Travel at the expense of the national organization, for example, was to be undertaken "only upon direct authorization ... only ... after ... a definite Department invitation and then only if it means the avoidance of duplicated visits on the part of national officers at any one function." Official visits also required three or four assignments per visit to justify the \$6 per diem travel expenses. With no money or time to see the sights in Kansas City or visit Tucker relatives in Kingman, he boarded the train for home the last week of September.²⁹

Over the next few weeks Paul was preoccupied preparing for Armistice Day. Legion officials in Indianapolis and Washington, D.C., kept him busy with elaborate instructions on when to travel, where to stay, and what to do. He was reminded to make reservations "immediately" at the Mayflower Hotel, the Legion's Capitol headquarters, "as the hotel is terribly crowded at all times." On "Armistice Eve," 10 November, he would attend a "dinner and dance" at the Mayflower in honor of the national commander. The next morning he would be escorted by Legionnaires from the D.C. district to the U.S. Army's Walter Reed hospital, where he was to "officiate" by delivering a sermon. Then it was on to the National Cemetery for official ceremonies at 11 a.m. Five days later his presence was "required" in Indianapolis for a week of Legion committee meetings.³⁰

Despite the careful preparations, Paul's first major trip as National Chaplain did not go as planned. The movement of soldiers and sup-



Figure 77 Paul Mortimore in Uniform, 1943

Within the ranks of the American Legion Paul rose quickly, both as spiritual leader and military spokesman. His election as Idaho State Chaplain in 1941 provided a stepping stone to larger responsibilities. Idaho's governor in 1942 commissioned him as a major in the Idaho Volunteer Reserves. That same year at their national convention in Kansas City, Legionnaires elected him National Chaplain. It was the highlight of his career.

plies was the highest priority of wartime transport. Just a few weeks before Paul departed, the Office of Defense Transportation had imposed severe restrictions on nonessential train travel. With the trans-continental trunk lines clogged with traffic and “thousands of people traveling,” Paul had to leave early. He felt “fine” and was too excited to complain. His postcards and letters to the “dear folks” back home read like a country bumpkin on his first trip to the big city—which, in a way, he was. From Chicago, he wrote that he would try to see Niagara Falls while the train was stopped overnight in Buffalo, but the train arrived “too late ... to see the falls.” Perhaps he didn’t realize that even in daylight Buffalo was thirty miles away from Niagara.³¹

He reached his destination on 10 November and checked in at the Mayflower—“*the* hotel in Washington, and I’ll probably know it when I go to pay my bill.” The city “looks like Portland without hills & evergreens.” Writing from his room late at night, he was “tired out” after the “big banquet tonight” with “many dignitaries,” followed by an evening visit to a radio studio. “If you heard Phillip Morris program tonight you heard National Commander Waring talk to a Marine in Cal. I was sitting next to him. Big times. Must rest now.”³²

On 11 November Washington was overcast after a week of rain. Paul drew on nervous energy to sustain him on his “big day.” It was a tremendous success. At Walter Reed hospital he thanked wounded soldiers and their caregivers for their sacrifices, ending with a moral imperative: “War is hell on earth. Your task and theirs is not complete until war is banished from the earth.” Riding along in a military vehicle for ten miles from Bethesda through the capitol on the way to Arlington gave Paul a chance to recharge spiritually and reflect on the magnitude of the event. At precisely 11:00 a.m., standing at a podium in front of President Roosevelt and an array of military and civilian dignitaries, he spoke into a battery of microphones and led the nation in prayer. Unfortunately, his letter describing the ceremonies has been lost, but from congratulatory letters we can judge the impact. A Pocatello salesman, listening in rapt attention, told Paul that his “voice came over full, resounding with no trace of hesitation. Subject and delivery was [sic] perfect.” Another said that his “voice came in as clear

as a bell. It thrilled me as much as Wilkie's great speech after his return from around the world." Obviously, the writer was not impressed with the remarks of the president that followed the chaplain's prayer. He told Paul that "We need men like you to save the Cause from Pacifists and men trained only in the Effete Eastern Divinity Schools, with their flawless Groton speech."³³

Paul spent the following day basking in the limelight and seeing the sights. He was filled with wonder, like a kid in Disneyland. After breakfast he toured the FBI building escorted by an "agent (not a guide) assigned to show me thru." Then on to the Capitol to see the "senate in action" and have lunch "by special dispensation" in the Senate restaurant. After a ride to the top of the Washington monument and a visit to the Lincoln Memorial ("It is grand"), he was escorted across the Potomac to Mount Vernon, "the most beautiful farm and location I have ever seen." Back in D.C. that evening, he went to another banquet full of civilian dignitaries and military brass that "some would have paid any price to have attended." Seated next to General Arnold, the Air Force chief, across from "Pres. R. and Gen. Pershing," and "very near" General George C. Marshall, Roosevelt's chief of staff, Paul listened intently while "Gen. Marshall told us the whole *inside* story of present invasion of Africa, etc. What a thrill. The greatest function of its kind probably." That night he couldn't sleep before writing his parents "about this day before it fades from my memory too much..."³⁴

Three days later he was in Indianapolis on Legion business, but feeling "full of flu." After a day's rest in bed he still felt "terrible." Alarmed, his Legion colleagues sent him to the VA hospital for a full checkup. The doctor "put me to bed," he wrote. "There is lots of this trouble here, the Dr. says." Two days later he was still there, missing all the Legion meetings but feeling much better. He had nothing but praise for the facility:

They sure do a thorough job of going over you here. [The doctor] just came in with the good (?) news that I have some sort of kidney or bladder or something infection and they want to find out what it is and fix it! ... If I had just gone to a city hospital I

would be out by now, well as usual. But they do not overlook a thing here, and they try to check every possible source of future trouble. I never could pay for such service, or get better, not matter what I did pay.³⁵

After two more days convalescing, Paul checked out of the hospital “feeling fine” and determined to attend “a few meetings” before he left. “They would keep me here at least a couple of weeks longer if I would let them,” he told his parents. On Sunday he “Went to church twice ... and Child Welfare Conference all afternoon so I am ready for bed.” The next day he boarded the train for home.³⁶

Paul’s service as national chaplain ended in September 1943 at the annual meeting in Omaha. After the exciting Armistice Day events the previous November the rest of the term was anticlimactic. As a spokesman in the Pacific Northwest for the Legion’s Americanization and Child Welfare programs, he traveled by train when space and funding were available, preaching on Sundays and speaking at civic events and club meetings. The 1942 Armistice Day trip also padded his résumé as a Washington insider. Wartime audiences were captivated by his “entertaining and charming” lectures and “vivid” word pictures of the great men and monuments he had seen in the nation’s capital. Like a one-man Chautauqua he could be light-hearted one moment and somber the next, but every performance included a patriotic message or poignant homily.³⁷

As America turned from defense to offense in 1943, he warned against complacency. The unfounded optimism now sweeping the

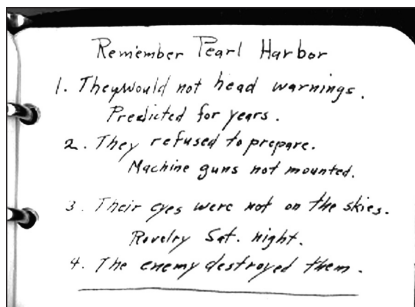


Figure 78 Paul on Pearl Harbor

Paul Mortimore welcomed the Legion’s views on national defense. From the pulpit he warned against isolationism in the face of Fascism and “godless Communism.” After Pearl Harbor he outlined his thoughts on preparedness—the basis of many speeches to civic organizations in Idaho and beyond.

country, he said in Twin Falls, "will do serious damage to America's war effort unless the nation discards rose-colored glasses and buckles down to work." The speech impressed one reporter, who assured readers that the National Chaplain had "conferred personally with Gen. George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff, and with the general staff officers."³⁸

Gratified by the positive response to his public outreach, he envisioned a more visible role for the national chaplain. "In a number of appearances which were unofficial," he wrote in a memo to headquarters, "we have discovered that there is a great deal of this type of work which the posts are very desirous to have and which we believe to be of the highest value to the Legion." Headquarters took note but stuck to tradition. It was probably just as well. Paul was a showman, as one colleague described him, too hard of an act to follow.³⁹

Onward and Upward

Long before he left office as national chaplain, Paul contemplated future opportunities, both inside and outside the American Legion. In December 1942 he had led prayers and spoke emphatically at the Legion's Child Welfare program in Sun Valley, where the National Defense Committee was also meeting under Warren Atherton's chairmanship. An attorney from Stockton, California, Atherton was elected national commander in 1943. He had met the Pocatello pastor in Indianapolis but had little time to get acquainted. Though Paul was unequal to his comrade in education and economic status, they shared similar views and perceptions about America and its future.

Not long after the Sun Valley meeting Paul was invited to join Atherton on the National Defense Committee, later reorganized as the National Security Committee. Much later I interviewed Atherton about his active Legion years and asked him why an Idaho preacher would participate in a meeting on security. In the stylized drawl of a country lawyer, he said he had "uncovered the fact" that Paul "had a marked interest in national security." Perhaps the appointment was a quid pro quo. Atherton admitted without hesitation that Paul "was one of the Idaho delegation that supported my candidacy" for national commander.⁴⁰

During Commander Atherton's term the Legion made its most important contribution to American social history. Congress passed the GI Bill of Rights after a hard-fought Legion campaign on behalf of returning war veterans. Legionnaires were determined to avoid the sorry legacy of World War I. Regardless of their physical or mental conditions, veterans of the Great War had come home to face the hard realities of poverty, unemployment, homelessness, neglect, and indifference. Over the next two decades they continued to languish while the nation's attention was focused on broader economic and security issues.

By 1943, however, as the tide of war turned in favor of the Allies, Legionnaires and their supporters in Congress saw an opportunity to promote a comprehensive veteran's program. Under Atherton's leadership, a select committee of Legionnaires drafted a bill incorporating educational and health benefits, loan guarantees, unemployment compensation, and other features. It took more than six months to push the proposal through the legislative process, aided by a national publicity effort that involved thousands of Legionnaires in every state. President Roosevelt signed the bill on 22 June 1944, with happy Legionnaires and legislative backers looking on. In historian David Kennedy's words, the GI Bill "stood out as the most emblematic of all World War II-era political accomplishments." In education alone, it accelerated social change by "propelling an entire generation along an ascending curve of achievement and affluence that their parents could not have dreamed."⁴¹

In the battle for the GI Bill, Paul played only a minor role. After leaving the national stage when his term as national chaplain ended in the fall of 1943, he carried on as Idaho state chaplain and kept active on the National Security Committee. In 1944, along with other Legionnaires, he opened a new campaign to promote universal military training. The American Legion Military Training Bill would require non-college-bound eighteen-year-olds to have one year of military training and college freshmen to undertake a "modified" training program so that they would be prepared in case of a "national emergency." For several years Paul and his colleagues promoted preparedness in peacetime, but the

idea was abhorrent to the American public and the bill went nowhere in Congress.⁴²

Paul's service on the National Security Committee kept him active in the American Legion for years after his term ended as a national officer. He spoke frequently on patriotism and national defense, but in public gatherings avoided the political rhetoric often he expressed in the company of family and friends. On questions of national policy he mirrored the views of his favorite radio commentator, Fulton Lewis Jr., long a staple of doctrinaire conservatives. Like Lewis, Paul was ardently anti-Communist. He distrusted the Russians, opposed American efforts to aid them during the war, and thought Roosevelt had played into their hands at Yalta. At the 1946 Armistice Day parade in Boise, while Soviet-backed guerrillas were fighting in Greece, he urged Americans to buy war bonds and continue to support "those nations resisting Communist aggression." He was dismayed by the communist takeover in China in 1949. When the Chinese invaded South Korea in 1950 he welcomed General MacArthur's call for all-out war against the Communist invaders, and strenuously opposed what he regarded as President Truman's "interference."⁴³

Paul's work with the American Legion offered opportunities for travel and public service that his Pocatello pastorate could never provide, but he still had bills to pay and a family to support. Unlike many senior Legion officials who were retired businessmen, Paul lacked the resources to travel without a steady income or outside help. Asking his church elders for a higher salary was out of the question—they were still paying off the debt for the new church building. Legion headquarters in Indianapolis occasionally authorized a small travel stipend for national officers, but most Legionnaires volunteered their time and paid their own expenses. His economic vulnerability was a constant worry and a frequent source of friction at home. Tired of pinching pennies, Huldah took a part-time teaching job once the children were in school to help make ends meet.⁴⁴

In the spring of 1943, to appease the home front, Paul took Huldah along on a combined business-pleasure trip to Legion headquarters in Indiana. They sent their two young daughters by train to Paul's folks

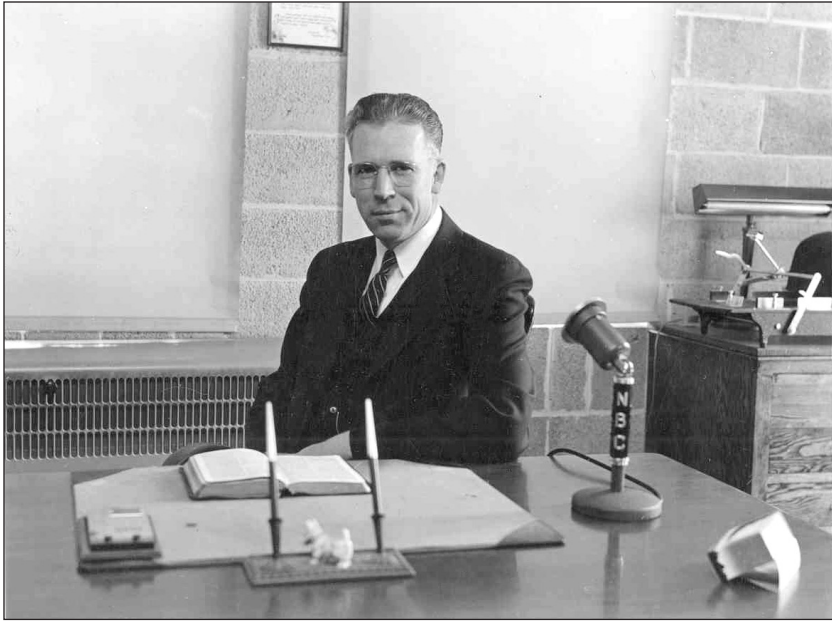


Figure 79 Paul on the Radio

Paul was determined to prove the power of radio as an evangelistic tool. In September 1937 he inaugurated a series of weekly sunrise services, broadcast live on a local station. That project blossomed into regular broadcasts from the Sunday morning pulpit. Success in radio broadcasting in Pocatello, and later in Bozeman and Ellensburg, paid dividends in higher church attendance, better funding, and greater visibility.

in Ontario, and then Paul's sister Evelyn brought them to the ranch in New Plymouth. She needed help hoeing weeds in the victory garden. David was seventeen and old enough to stay home alone. His parents rode the train to Chicago, spent a night in a "good hotel but plenty high priced," and took in a "radio broadcast" before renting a car for the drive to Indianapolis. A week later they started the long drive home, finding hotels crowded along the way but "little traffic on the fine highways now." Despite "miserable" weather in the Midwest Paul enjoyed the trip, but his chatty notes home fail to mention how Huldah felt. Her letters have not survived.⁴⁵

Money troubles at home contributed to Paul's decision to leave Pocatello, but he was also motivated by an incongruous mixture of personal ambition and religious dedication. After five successful years in

Mormon-dominated southeastern Idaho his career had reached another turning point. He had built a new church, expanded Christian radio, enlarged the congregation, and remodeled the parsonage. His work there was done. He was ready to move on as early as 1942, while still campaigning for national office in the American Legion. Upon learning that the Christian church in Salem, Oregon, needed a new pastor after the incumbent, aged sixty, suddenly “dropped over dead,” he quietly asked close friends for letters of recommendation. The election in Kansas City ended his Oregon quest, but he kept looking ahead during his term as national chaplain.⁴⁶

Paul’s search ended in the summer of 1943. A new position opened that seemingly had his name written all over it. He accepted an offer to become the first executive secretary, state evangelist, and religious education director for the Christian Churches of South Idaho and Utah. It was a complex administrative job, as the onerous title suggests, but it offered a decent salary and plenty of opportunity to travel. It also kept him preaching the gospel, his seminal mission in life.

American Christian Church origins were discussed briefly in chapter 12. Organizations later identified as Christian, Disciples of Christ, or Churches of Christ were originally composed of independent, autonomous congregations. All shared a common faith in Christ as Savior and the Bible as the infallible guide to salvation, but efforts to bring them together under one denominational rubric have generally failed because of doctrinal or liturgical disputes. Geography has also played a role, with fundamentalist congregations in the South and rural Midwest less sympathetic to changes sought by reform-minded congregations in the urban North and West. Differences over the use of instrumental music in church caused a major split in 1906. In the 1920s, resistance to Protestant modernism, as exemplified in the Scopes Trial, and real or perceived threats to local self-government further undermined unification efforts. In Paul’s day there were three main wings: one opposing instrumental music in church (Church of Christ non-instrumental); a second opposing liberalism and modernism (Christian Churches and Churches of Christ); and a third largely made up of ecumenically minded progressives (Christian Church-Disciples of Christ). On questions



Figure 80 Paul's Trailer

For eight years Paul served the south Idaho Christian churches as executive secretary. In the summer of 1943 he moved his family from Pocatello to a rented house in Caldwell, but spent little time there himself, in part to avoid his shrewish spouse. He set a torrid pace on the road, roaming his district in a Hudson sedan—his favorite car—pulling a small trailer home crammed with office equipment. It also had a tiny bed—much too small for his large frame. He used it only as a last resort when guest quarters were not available.

of music and cooperation, if not fundamentalism, Paul identified with the progressives. His challenge, as executive secretary, was to keep the diverse, and sometimes divisive, Christian Churches of southern Idaho and Utah working together to achieve common goals.⁴⁷

One of those goals was to promote missionary work abroad. Most of the congregations within Paul's jurisdiction supported the United Christian Missionary Society (UCMS), a charitable organization founded in the 19th century by the Disciples of Christ to aid missionary efforts in Africa, Asia, and other foreign fields. Over the years the UCMS grew from a modest program to an ecumenical educational institution, cooperating with other Protestant denominations to support a variety of charitable activities at home and abroad. Funds for these operations came from individual donations and church offerings, channeled through a national foundation controlled by a board of directors with discretionary powers to distribute money where needed.⁴⁸

Though Paul recognized the importance of cooperation, some voices in the church saw UCMS as a threat to their independence. They ridiculed the elaborate UCMS support structure with an acronym, “you see a mess,” and called for a return to direct missionary support. By the time Paul took office these “independents” had organized their own missionary support system. Keeping the independents from undermining congregational cooperation was a constant battle, both within Paul’s jurisdiction and without.⁴⁹

For eight years Paul served the south Idaho Christian churches. In the summer of 1943 he moved his family from Pocatello to a rented house in Caldwell, but spent little time there himself, in part to avoid his shrewish spouse. He set a torrid pace on the road, literally roaming his district in a Hudson sedan—his favorite car—pulling a small trailer home crammed with office equipment. It also had a tiny bed—much too small for his large frame. He used it only as a last resort when guest quarters were not available.⁵⁰

The call to service outweighed almost every other consideration in Paul’s life. In September 1943 he was in Indianapolis on Legion business when his father died in Ontario after a long illness. The family delayed the funeral until he could catch a train home. After a few days consoling his mother and attending to her needs he rushed back to Omaha to fulfill his last formal obligations as the Legion’s national chaplain.⁵¹

After the war, with building materials available and church contributions on the increase, Paul promoted the construction of new churches and the revitalization of old ones. He led revival meetings, established a summer camp for Christian youth near Sun Valley, and counseled young pastors on procedure and even behavior if necessary. Once in Portland he was called to help a distraught pastor who had been arrested for lewd behavior at the bus depot. After learning at police headquarters that the charge involved homosexuality, Paul emphatically denied that any Christian minister could be gay. He accused the authorities of entrapment and lectured the police chief on the lessons of Sodom and Gomorra. The chief turned the accused over to Paul’s custody and dismissed the case. “Sometimes it was just by

sheer personality that Paul made things go,” one of his colleagues told me later.⁵²

In addition to his fulltime responsibilities as state secretary, Paul remained active on the Legion’s child welfare, national security, and service committees, and still managed to keep his Christian supply business running on the side. His hectic schedule often left him dyspeptic, unable to eat or relax. “I am terribly busy doing three jobs,” he wrote a colleague early in 1945, “and right now is the busy season, so I will not have time to write more.”⁵³

The pressure let up in August, when he usually could find a few days to relax with a fishing pole, either at the Sun Valley encampment after hours, or at his favorite lake in Yellowstone National Park. He took the whole family there in 1949—minus David, at that time busily preparing for his first term as a school teacher. “This is about the first time I have slowed down or been where I could write,” Paul told his mother in a postcard. He “caught plenty of fish” and figured he’d come more often, but “Huldah and girls don’t care much for camping out.”

Work began again in earnest during the fall months, although in later years he occasionally escaped to hunt pheasants with his dog “Queenie,” a black cocker spaniel. Whenever Paul was close to our farm during hunting season he brought along Queenie and a 20-gauge shotgun. One year he arrived with David and the dog, intent on letting off steam after an intense week of meetings. Queenie was also geared up for the chase and frequently ran too far ahead, rousting out the birds in our alfalfa and grain fields. Paul boiled in frustration, calling her back with a yell that got louder each time. “Queenie! Queenie!” The little animal ran ahead once too often, ignoring her master’s commands. With David and I helplessly watching, Paul took aim and fired. The dog returned that time, limping with a rear end full of buckshot.⁵⁴

Of all his accomplishments, Paul was proudest of the honorary doctorate he received in 1951 from the College of Idaho in Caldwell. The recognition highlighted the college’s graduation ceremonies in June 1951. At the baccalaureate service he stood before a large gathering and preached a sermon informed by his faith and his passionate belief in individual moral responsibility. There was no room in Paul’s philosophy



Figure 81 Paul with Martha

Of all his accomplishments, Paul was proudest of the honorary doctorate he received in 1951 from the College of Idaho in Caldwell. After the ceremonies Paul's family gathered for a picnic. His seventy-six-year-old twice-widowed mother, Martha, took a jaundiced view of the affair. On the back of a photo standing next to her son she wrote: "So he's Dr. Paul DeF. Mortimore ha! but that don't make him any better. He really is a great man in many ways tho. & I pray constantly that he & his family may be true Christians."

for situational ethics. "Each must choose his road, and as he chooses, so his life must be," he told graduates. True leaders avoid the "low road" of selfishness. They take the "difficult path" of service, for a "life lived only for self cannot be valuable even to self." It was a familiar message, a guide to Christian living that he tried to follow himself.⁵⁵

Paul may not have known who actually recommended him for the honor, but many years later I found out from Paul M. Pitman, the college president at the time. It was quite a string of coincidences, beginning with Pitman's father, who had played football at USC with Tully Knoles, later president of the College of the Pacific in Stockton. The Knoles and Pitman families became good friends. Pitman's son was well acquainted with Tully's successor, Robert E. Burns, who was still president when I took a teaching job at Pacific in 1966. Burns was a devout Methodist, and during World War II he had preached part-time in the Stockton area while he served as Knoles's assistant. He was also a Rotarian and a director of the YMCA. In one of these wartime capacities he learned of the Idaho preacher and his work for the American Legion. Later, chatting with his old friend Paul Pitman during a conference they both attended, Burns "suggested that Paul DeF. Mortimore deserved an honorary degree." By that time Paul Mortimore was well known in southwest Idaho. A few months later the two Pauls happened to ride the same train together from Chicago to Caldwell, and

they “helped pass time” by having “a good visit.” It gave the president an “up close and personal” opportunity to consider Burns’ suggestion, although Pitman said nothing about it until he could meet with his college trustees. When they unanimously endorsed Paul’s candidacy, the College of Idaho president was “delighted to pay him the honor.”⁵⁶

After the ceremonies Paul’s family gathered for a picnic in the backyard of his Caldwell home. All except one were in a celebratory mood. His seventy-six-year-old twice-widowed mother, Martha, stood tall but took a jaundiced view of the affair. She had a nervous disposition, a trait inherited by Paul and his sister Evelyn. All were subject to emotional outbursts they fought hard to repress. Before the 1960s it was unseemly for denominational Christians to openly express deep feelings. But outward calm often hid internal angst. At the picnic Martha joined in the celebration, but her Free Methodist Holiness conscience cried out for humility. On the back of a photo of her son in his crimson doctoral gown she wrote: “so he’s Dr. Paul DeF. Mortimore ha! but that don’t make him any better. He really is a great man in many ways tho. & I pray constantly that he & his family may be true Christians.”⁵⁷

Paul had reached a plateau rather than a pinnacle. He was an experienced evangelist with a proud new title, doctor of divinity. He stood ready to serve wherever the Lord called, but at the age of fifty-three he had to be practical. With little savings and no safety net, he still had a long way to go before retirement.

Money and status were actually less important in his job plans in 1951 than his health. After eight years as state secretary Paul was physically tired and emotionally drained. Added to his chronic stomach trouble was a hernia that he had ignored for years. It began to trouble him so much that he started wearing a truss. But there seemed to be no remedy for stress. A new battle had broken out over support for the United Christian Missionary Society, led by an independent pastor who had turned against Paul’s progressive leadership. The trouble soon spread to other churches in southern Idaho, causing some congregations to break away.⁵⁸

Though his conference board of directors continued to support him, Paul was shaken by the independent revolt. He kept his own counsel

at home, but he sought the advice of peers in the Christian movement. One UCMS colleague in a neighboring state wrote him frankly that it was unwise to continue if he had “a warning of some phase of nervous break.” Better to find a less stressful position, away from the frustration of fighting noncooperative ministers. They were a “great deal like the Communists in the political world,” he said. “They seem to be so insistent, so determined to break up our Brotherhood and sometimes I feel like about the only thing to do is to break their necks.” That sentiment echoed another friend’s opinion that those “independent forces ... are an insidious influence to deal with. They use the infiltration methods of the Reds.”⁵⁹

Given Paul’s strong anti-Communist views, analogies like these undoubtedly struck a responsive chord, but they were hardly reassuring. He knew it was time to go, and indeed had been looking for alternatives before the latest storm hit. In the summer of 1951, after accepting a pastorate in Bozeman, Montana, he resigned the Idaho position and headed for the beautiful Big Sky country near his favorite fishing spot in Yellowstone. After he left, Lloyd Newton, a cooperative pastor in Utah and a personal friend, wrote a comforting tribute to Paul’s work in Idaho:

Your planning and foresight [sic] has placed So. Idaho and Utah far ahead of many areas in planning for Church expansion. I know that there are those who would not agree with me in this matter but really they are small people in the Kingdom of God who lack vision.... Perhaps we shall never know in this life why you were called upon to carry the heavy cross that you did ... [but] God is still on the throne and He knows.⁶⁰

Home at Last

After eight years helping other pastors and congregations in southern Idaho, Paul had a church of his own again in Montana. Bozeman was a small college town on the high plains of Southwest Montana, nestled between two mountain ranges and surrounded by farms and ranches.

The nearest town of any size was Billings, a rail center 150 miles away. In the McCarthy era, Bozeman was staunchly conservative like the rest of the state. Even the State College president, dependent on state funding for salaries and support, closely monitored campus activities to preclude any outward signs of liberalism. Paul felt comfortable in this environment.⁶¹

His ministry in Bozeman was also comforting at first. Attendance rose as young members brought their children in for Sunday school and stayed to hear a moving sermon from their new preacher in his crimson robe. Paul was gratified. One spring Sunday in 1952 he wrote a cheery letter to his mother about the “fine service today ... church was packed.” Older church members had second thoughts, however, for they were not accustomed to flamboyant display. But they liked his sermons as well as his politics. He avoided political sermons, but his weekly newsletters were fair game for political commentary. Like contemporary radio shows that worked commercials into the story line, Paul used politics as a promotional tool. He found a good opportunity in 1952, when Congress amended the tax code to allow tax-free charitable deductions. “The Government is thus recognizing the need of increased giving to our religious forces in order to maintain our American way of life,” he wrote. “The fight with Communism has brought to our attention as never before, the absolute necessity of America being a Christian nation. Christianity is the greatest foe of Communism.”⁶²

The slower pace of life in Bozeman allowed him more time for fishing and hunting, sometimes with his own family but mostly with a few dedicated sportsmen like himself. A letter to his mother in November 1952 described the plans for one mid-week trip:

[I want] to go out in the mountains for a few days, starting tomorrow, and see if there is any prospect of getting an elk. They are down in the timber I am told, but the man who has the horses wants to go so we shall go for a couple of days anyway.... We just go up the canyon about 50 miles, and stay right there at a tourist camp on the high way. Every day we ride back 8 to 10 miles and see what we can see, and come home. It is quite a comfortable

way to hunt, and we are in touch with things all of the time. I would like it as well if we could go way back, and make a camp, but this is so handy, it seems the best way to hunt.

In the same letter he noted a drop-off in church attendance, a concern that grew larger during his Bozeman ministry:

People don't come to church so well this fine weather. We have good crowds, but should be turning people away like we used to at La Grande. These folks just are not church minded. They have never seemed to have too much interest, and it will take a long time to overcome the indifference I guess."⁶³

Indifference perhaps, but symptomatic of a national trend, the decline of denominationalism. What Paul took personally was happening all over America in the postwar period. Institutional religion gradually gave way to the youthful yearning for free religious expression. Between 1944 and 2000, Americans calling themselves Protestant declined by 20 percent; church attendance dropped by over 30 percent. Robert Wuthnow, professor of religion at Princeton, has written extensively on the subject. In one book he labeled the crosscurrents of postwar spirituality *The Struggle for America's Soul*.⁶⁴

Paul worked hard to build his Bozeman congregation through radio broadcasts, expanded youth programs, and other forms of community outreach. But progress was slow. "No one wants to do any church work after Easter here," he wrote in 1954. "I am about fed up, and if things don't change some, I may be coming back south before too long." He softened a bit when it warmed up a month later, but the prospects looked grim:

This is a lovely country in nice weather. If the people just had any interest in God or religion, it would be ideal in many ways. But they surely do not. I never saw a place where people had as little real interest in anything spiritual at all. They just don't, period.⁶⁵

That fall he tried to sound more encouraging, telling his mother that he was “making a little progress along here, and I hope, helping these people.” But this was more wishful thinking than real change. Some members welcomed Paul’s efforts to attract new members, but he was too colorful for traditionalists. They saw his red robe as a red flag, unsanctified by scripture. In six years only fifty new members were added to the rolls.⁶⁶

The isolation from family and old friends added to his frustration and disappointment. When his mother wrote in 1954 that she was lonely and depressed, he confessed that “I know how you feel, but I am constantly trying to fight down such feelings in my own case because I know that such things cannot be helped.... We don’t like it way off up here away from everyone, but this seems to be the place the Lord put us, and we will have to like it until He lets us go somewhere else.”⁶⁷

Though seldom expressed today except on our coinage, trust in God was a universal Christian sentiment in Paul’s era. Devout Protestants commonly used the acronym “dv,” or “God Willing,” in family correspondence, even though some Christian denominations, including Paul’s, adopted the early Christian belief in free will. Paul saw no incongruity in asserting his own will to influence the course and direction of his life, and crediting God’s will for the ultimate decision. To do otherwise would be fatalism, an eastern philosophy alien to the western Christian tradition.⁶⁸

By the spring of 1953 Paul was contemplating another move. He began sending out inquiries, seeking vacant pastorates farther west. Any place in Oregon would do, although he might consider a southwest Idaho alternative. The variable weather added to his restlessness. After a late spring storm in Bozeman he complained that “I simply am buried in work—and snow. It seems to have decided to be winter here now.... I would sure like to get out of this country and nearer to people.”⁶⁹

Personal preference was perhaps not as important as concern for his mother, Martha, and desire to be closer to his own children. Martha had become increasingly dependent and neurotic after she lost her second husband, C. J. Peters, an elderly gentleman who died three months

after their marriage late in 1945. She lived alone in a rented house in Ontario, Oregon, and walked everywhere by necessity, since she had never learned to drive. Though he traveled widely on business, Paul wrote two or three times a week, and during his years in Caldwell visited her whenever he was close. After he moved to Montana the letters continued but the frequency of visits dropped precipitously. So did Martha's outlook on life. She talked of death and dying so often that her exasperated son, writing from the lounge car on a fast train in Minnesota, told her to "Stop expecting disasters! *Not one* you have ever expected ever happened! Be thankful for the roses—forget the thorns. You will never get out of this world alive anyway."⁷⁰

Martha was oblivious to her children's chiding. As her health declined and her walking stopped, she grew lonely and despondent. To cheer her up, early in 1955 Elois, Paul's oldest daughter, wrote that she would come for a visit that summer. It didn't help. "I may not be here when summer comes," her grandmother replied. "No one knows."⁷¹ Three years earlier Elois was married in Bozeman, with her father officiating. Her husband was a chain-smoking, high-strung engineer who worked for Boeing in Seattle. The news upset Martha. Paul tried to console her: "Why grieve and fret your life away because children grow up and move around?" he wrote. "You can't help it, and my children have been at home longer than most are already. I am thankful for that and when they go, we will just have to make the best of it. I feel sure that we will be happier if we try to accept the situation and be happy than if we grieve over the past."⁷²

Putting up a bold front for his mother masked feelings of loss that both Paul and Huldah shared when their children moved away. David, their eldest, after graduating from the University of Oregon in the spring of 1952, left by ship for Japan that fall to take a civilian teaching job at a U.S. airbase. A year later he returned after accepting a teaching position in Eugene. In 1954, Gloria, their youngest, finished college in Denver and married an Air Force pilot stationed in Sacramento. Their absence made Paul all the more anxious to relocate. "I surely wish I could find a good church somewhere on the coast so that we could be nearer the kids next year," he wrote Martha in the spring of 1953.⁷³

After four years of looking, Paul finally found another pastorate. The Christian Church in Ellensburg, Washington, needed a new minister. Moving to another small college town with a church comparable in size and attendance to the one he just left was a lateral move, not a move up. But the salary was higher, and the Mortimores were happy to be nearer their Oregon roots and closer to their children. Paul accepted the offer early in 1957 and announced his resignation from the pulpit at Bozeman rather than to the board. That seemed fitting. One Bozeman church member later wrote that the resignation “was mainly due to the lack of cooperation which he received from some influential members of the church board.”⁷⁴

Being “called to Ellensburg,” as Huldah described it, lifted Paul’s spirits and gave him a respite from the bitter cold of a Montana winter. The church board welcomed the Mortimores and literally made them feel at home by buying and remodeling a house next to the church for a parsonage. Instead of indifference, the Ellensburg congregation expressed their appreciation by filling the pews to listen to Dr. Mortimore in all his crimson finery. Though busy as ever, Paul felt comfortable and relaxed. When he visited a couple of old friends in Caldwell, they described him as “so confident and so vibrantly faithful in the future.”⁷⁵

But years of stress and hard work had been hard on his health. Vitamin pills and other patent remedies no longer seemed to help for an increasing number of aches and pains that local doctors dismissed as a natural part of the aging process. In June 1959 he “woke up in the middle of the night with a

“ketch” in my shoulder, high on the chest side, running around and down to my elbow. Went to the Dr. this morning and he took x-ray and blood count and says I will live! I guess it is just in the muscles, but it hurts. I took some arthritis medicine, and it seemed to help, but my arthritis medicine hurts my stomach, so now I have two small hurts instead of one big hurt....⁷⁶

Whether that “big hurt” was a minor ache or a warning of serious heart trouble ahead is open to speculation, but he accepted his doctor’s advice and went home to rest. More bothersome was the hernia that never seemed to get better despite all the pills, shots, and devices he had tried. I remember him staying all night at our home in New Plymouth during a short trip to visit his mother sometime in 1956 or ’57, after I had returned from active duty with the army. Our big house had three large bedrooms downstairs, including a guest room across from the room where I slept. My folks had retired for the night. I was getting ready for bed when I heard a knock on my door, and Uncle Paul came in. He wore a night shirt and a breech cloth that left his groin exposed so I could see the bulge in his lower abdomen. He poked at it a bit to give me a good idea of the problem, but I was embarrassed and couldn’t think of anything to say. It didn’t help that I had been smoking a cigarette and rushed to snuff it out before he saw it. The smell was obvious but he didn’t say a word, and after a moment he walked out.

In May 1959 the Ellensburg church bulletin announced that the Mortimores would take a month’s vacation in July. As the time approached, Paul told his mother about his plans. The letter turned out to be his last, written just ten days after his “ketch”:

I have decided to go to the hospital Friday morning and see if they can sew me up so I will stay closed! The hernia I had closed last summer opened again above where it was, and I am going to try surgery and see if it does any better. I hate to do it, but my doctor here says I am foolish to put up with it the way it is and it isn’t going to get any better until I do something. So I am going to the hospital Thursday night and have the surgery Friday morning. So I expect it will be some time before I want to do much driving again. I hate to spend my vacation that way but it seems to be the thing to do.⁷⁷

The surgeon never got a chance to operate. As the anesthesia dropped Paul into a deep sleep his heart stopped, and nothing could be done to revive him despite the desperate efforts of the medical

staff. Huldah accepted the doctor's explanation that "his heart was not strong enough to bring him through the ordeal." One of his daughters much later insisted that he was "killed by the anesthesiologist," but in 1959 medical malpractice suits were practically unheard of. Fortunately for his wife he had good life insurance.⁷⁸

Services for Paul in Ellensburg brought together a stunned congregation and a devastated family. I rode with his mother Martha in the back seat of our Buick all the way from Ontario to Ellensburg, 350 miles, with my father driving and my mother in the front passenger seat. All of us sat in stony silence, too shocked to speak as we rode through Paul's eastern Oregon homeland. La Grande, Pendleton, Umatilla—the towns and countryside had not changed much from Paul's early days as traveling evangelist. For the sermon text Rev. Clifford Trout, a longtime Mortimore family friend, selected a familiar passage from Timothy, one of the twelve disciples and a traveling companion of Paul Mortimore's early Christian namesake. Martha's Bible has the passage underlined and dated the day of the funeral. It was a fitting tribute:

But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

The Last Limbaugh Dirt Farmer

For 200 years farming was the primary occupation of American families with the Limbaugh surname. This narrative has followed one branch from its Old World roots in the 1750s to its last stand in Idaho two centuries later. Like most small farmers, year after year they just managed to get by. Living on the margins of prosperity left them marked with a cultural stigma. “Dirt farmers” some called them, a descriptive term that some may consider pejorative. But to those who worked the soil for a living, who experienced the daily struggle with all the forces of nature and the machinations of the marketplace, the term speaks to a proud tradition. Small farmers have all but disappeared in postmodern America, but their legacy lingers on.

In an earlier chapter, Evelyn and John Hadley Limbaugh, after four years of back-breaking work, had just begun to stabilize a rundown farm in Payette Valley when the U.S. entered World War II. This chapter concludes the farming phase of their lives. It draws on family papers and oral history, as well as my own personal perspective as a boy growing up in a late-Depression rural environment.

Farming changed dramatically in the 20th century, both as economic enterprise and a way of life. Without substantial subsidies, small farm families could not earn a decent living after World War I. Many failed altogether and joined the army of urban unemployed. A few stubborn-

ly bucked the trend and stayed on despite financial hardships and declining status. Between 1937 and 1960, the period when the Limbaughs were farming, the American farm population dropped 50 percent. Almost all who moved away were small farmers and their families.¹

Population statistics do not reflect the rising importance of corporate farming during the same period. Farm relief helped mostly the largest commercial enterprises that specialized in cotton, corn, and other staples. Larger operators had much more financial leverage than their smaller competitors. Government subsidies in the 1930s and rising prices a decade later together helped reverse the downward trend for the big growers. They invested in new technology to reduce labor costs and improve efficiency. They borrowed heavily to buy out marginal farmers and specialize in high-demand commercial crops or livestock. Charting the pattern of consolidation in this period illustrates both the shrinking number of farmers and the expanding acreage of commercial farms. They grew both in size and power while their smaller competitors declined.

Farm Finances in the Depression Years and Beyond

Economic security remained elusive for small farmers at mid-century. Whether tenants or landowners, they were too small to benefit from AAA farm programs that were designed in the 1930s to raise farm income. If they survived the devastating years of debt and drought, they were usually too broke to expand and too dependent on crop diversity to get ready cash to be able to specialize. Small landowners who needed money for operating expenses normally borrowed from lenders in the private mortgage market, but the costs and the risks of foreclosure were high. Even that option was closed to tenants until Congress addressed the problem in 1937. Title I of Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act “authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to loan a tenant, sharecropper, or farm laborer whatever amount might be necessary to buy and improve a farm.” As previously discussed, the newly created Farm Security Administration loaned active farmers without any other means just enough money to continue farming. In the lower Payette Valley the Limbaughs and at least eighty other farmers signed up for

this assistance. They welcomed the lower rates and the less-stringent qualifying requirements, but not the red tape that went with them.²

World War II did little to reverse the overall decline of the small farm in America, but it did stimulate production by increasing demand for food and fiber. Farm prices rose and so did the asset value of commodities and farm equipment, thus providing the collateral to borrow more government money to purchase the capital goods and supplies needed to expand production. This spiraling debt-demand cycle appears in the books of the Limbaugh family farm and shows why Evelyn and Hat Limbaugh constantly fretted about finances. From 1937 to 1942 they had to refinance every year to stay solvent and produce more goods, but as production rose so did their indebtedness.

With financial help from Farm Security the Limbaughs increased their agricultural output just in time to catch the surging wave of demand after 1940. They increased their dairy stock and improved their cultivated acreage. They pulled an old orchard in bottomland in order to grow alfalfa and planted prune trees on a 4-acre reclaimed hillside. They converted old pastureland into a cornfield to supplement the 40 acres of sweet corn already in production. In 1942, with prunes and butterfat the leading money crops, their net farm income rose 50 percent above the national average. But rising costs ate up most of those dollars.

Under FSA guidelines the government extended credit so long as their clients made reasonable progress, even if they could not meet their initial repayment schedule. Over a five-year period the Limbaughs borrowed nearly \$5,000 from the agency. By 1943 they had managed to pay about \$3,000 of the principal and interest due. In that year FSA itself came under close congressional scrutiny, spurred on by New Deal critics and the powerful farm lobby. The Farm Bureau complained that the FSA was too liberal, a social experiment alien to free market capitalism. Conservatives in Congress managed to slash FSA's funding and functions—a "fatal blow" that essentially brought the program to an end by 1946. Amortized loans approved by FSA continued to be processed by the agency or its successors until the debt was paid in full.³

For all but low credit risks the financial options for landowners were more extensive. The American farm credit industry began as far back as the 1780s. Before the 20th century most of the borrowed money for land purchases or for stock and seed and equipment came from private capital. Underwriting farm loans was a lucrative, largely unregulated business that attracted large and small lenders, from individual investors to commercial banks and life insurance companies. In good times farmers accepted, if not welcomed, short-term mortgages on real estate and chattels at high interest rates, but in hard times they turned to the government for relief. In the late 19th century most of their monetary and regulatory reform proposals failed at the federal level, but domestic farming interests gained political power as foreign war clouds gathered after 1910. Pressured by the farm lobby, Congress passed the Federal Farm Loan Act in 1916 to stabilize the farm credit system and meet the increasing financial needs of commercial agriculture. The legislation and subsequent amendments established a nationwide network of federal land banks and farm loan associations. Initially funded by Congress, land banks later financed the credit system by selling government-backed bonds on the open market. Proceeds from bond sales served as capital for loans to eligible farmers. After a slow start the federal land bank program gradually assumed a larger share of the business. Government competition drove down interest rates and loosened the grip of private industry. But private lenders still dominated the mortgage market in the dismal 1920s and '30s—and took most of the blame for the rising foreclosure rate.⁴

The 1916 land bank legislation did not distinguish between large and small farmers, but land ownership was required to secure a land bank mortgage. Tenants were disqualified by definition—one reason that New Dealers offered them relief through resettlement and farm security measures. Former tenants who became landowners were eligible for a land bank loan, but still had to meet the credit standards of their local farm loan association. The Spokane Land Bank Board chairman made it clear that applicants not only had to pledge their property but also assume “direct personal responsibility” for loans.⁵

The Limbaughs did not realize they had become eligible for a land

bank loan when they signed a contract in 1940 to buy the “old French place.” After three years as tenants, they rushed into buying the property from the Oregon Mortgage Company (OMC) mainly to protect their improvements from an opportunistic speculator. Like most rural families in that era, they were isolated and insular. They had little time to follow national affairs, and little interest in the details of federal programs unless those programs had a direct and immediate impact on their communities or themselves. Evelyn expressed that narrow vision in a later interview: “When we moved to the Idaho place we only leased it; we had no idea of being able to buy it then. We weren’t thinking that far ahead; we were only thinking about getting back to farming.”⁶

R. H. Davidson, a friendly OMC agent in Boise, helped them draw up a contract and secure a loan for the \$6,200 principal at 5 percent interest, payable in annual installments over ten years. This more than doubled their total debt and added a real estate mortgage to their existing FSA crop and chattel mortgages. With all their assets leveraged to the hilt, they were totally dependent on income from crop and cattle production. Every missed payment brought them perilously close to bankruptcy. The paperwork burden alone added to their misery, since every sale required prior approval from the lenders. If they had nothing to sell when a payment to OMC was due, they borrowed more money from FSA—robbing Peter to pay Paul, but it kept them afloat until the next payment.

Davidson’s personal relations with the Limbaugh family belie the “loan shark” stereotype and helps explain why they overlooked the federal land bank opportunity, even though Davidson himself tipped them off about the government option. In March 1940, just as their OMC loan was approved, he noted that “a new bill revamping the Land Bank ... will probably enable you to refinance in a much shorter time than you could under the present act. Once you can do this you will be on a ‘hog train.’”⁷

As intermediary between lender and client, Davidson softened the dry professional tone of business letters with personal remarks. During the Battle of Britain he told them his son Edward, married to a

Londoner, was taking the war “very hard” because a “lot of his folks have been blown out of their homes.” He was jocular in other letters, helping ease the financial tension the Limbaughs felt when called on the carpet for delinquent payments. Just before FDR’s third-term victory in November 1940, learning from a note from Evelyn that she was in the hospital, he replied, “You didn’t say why, so we are speculating as to whether it might be an appendix, a tonsil, or some major re-conditioning job, but have come to the conclusion that you probably decided to go in until after election to quiet your nerves.” She was too embarrassed to tell him that it was indeed “re-conditioning”—a hysterectomy and hemorrhoid repair.⁸

Sometime during the three years they were with the Oregon Mortgage Company, the Limbaughs realized they were paying too much for personal service. In February 1943 they were approved for a federal land bank loan that paid their remaining debt to OMC and charged them 4 percent interest on a new ten-year mortgage, a whole percentage point less than the private lender had required. The good news prompted a sour-grapes response from Edward Low, a mid-level OMC manager. He told them he was sorry to lose their business “in view of the accommodations which have been granted from time to time but, of course, this is entirely your affair, and there is no bad feeling on our part.”⁹

The land bank loan eased their financial pain a little, but they still were indebted to the Farm Security Administration. Fighting the FSA bureaucracy caused more anxiety than facing thirty head of dairy cows every morning. Evelyn was ambivalent as she recalled her efforts to work with FSA staff:

Lots of people hated Farm Security, but we didn’t, we appreciated it, but every time you sold a pig you couldn’t spend the money; you had to go to Farm Security. Every time you need feed or plough shares or something you had to go to FSA and ask if you could have it. Whether you got it depended a great deal on the atmosphere there that day, and whether you were delinquent on your payments, and how they evaluated you....¹⁰

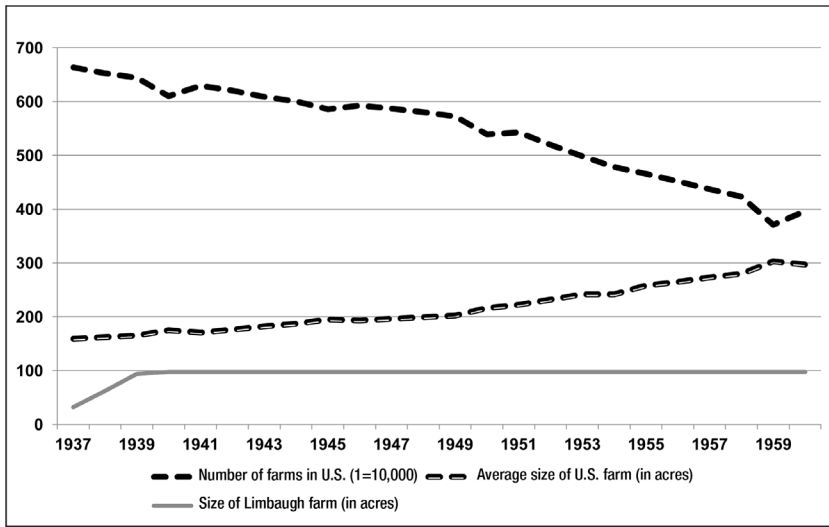


Figure 82 U.S. Farms by Number and Size

As the war economy picked up and their gross income rose after 1941, the Limbaughs no longer needed operating cash from Farm Security. Yet it took eight more years to pay off the previous loans. Every year the chattel and crop mortgages had to be renewed, and every rule had to be followed, which meant periodic inspections of the books and frequent trips to the Payette office. The bureaucratic burden lessened after FSA folded and its assets were absorbed into the Farm Credit Administration under the Department of Agriculture. After 1945 the Limbaughs sent their repayment checks to a farmer's cooperative under the federal Production Credit Association.

The production momentum they had built up during the war years carried over to 1946. Gross farm income that year rose above \$10,000, their best year as Idaho farmers—although a substantial part of that income came from selling assets, as we shall see. Moreover, after deducting operating costs and mortgage payments they were left with a net income of only \$833—little more than a third of what average American families earned that year.¹¹

Although the dairy business accounted for most of the farmwork and much of their income through the war years, in 1946 they held a public dairy sale that eased the daily pressure on all family members.



Figure 83 Hat the Dirt Farmer

John Hadley Limbaugh, or just plain “Hat” to his wife, Evelyn, had little education, few assets, and a body crippled by polio, but he loved farming and was determined to succeed despite the odds. With Evelyn’s help he operated the old Valley View farm for 20 years but could not keep up with the pace of change in farming methods and finance after World War II. The era of diversified small farms had already passed by the time he died in 1960.

On the auction block went twenty-six registered Jersey milk cows, twelve heifers, fifty tons of alfalfa hay, and their only milking machine. Evelyn later explained the pragmatic thinking behind the decision to sell. Some of the cows had Bangs disease and all had to go because “when you began to cull them out you didn’t have anything left.... You had to use strategy in selling ... if you kept anything back you got nothing for what you sold.” Potential buyers would say, “Well, they’re keeping all the good ones; all they’re selling are culls.”¹²

After the sale they “came out all right,” Evelyn admitted. Just breaking even was worth not having to get up at 5 a.m. each morning. They could always return to milking and build a new herd free of disease, but that idea died with Hat’s declining health and Evelyn’s search for work off the farm.

Without cows to milk, Hat turned more toward crop production and stock raising. In 1947, after years of working with draft horses, he made a surprising decision. Evelyn told me the story later:

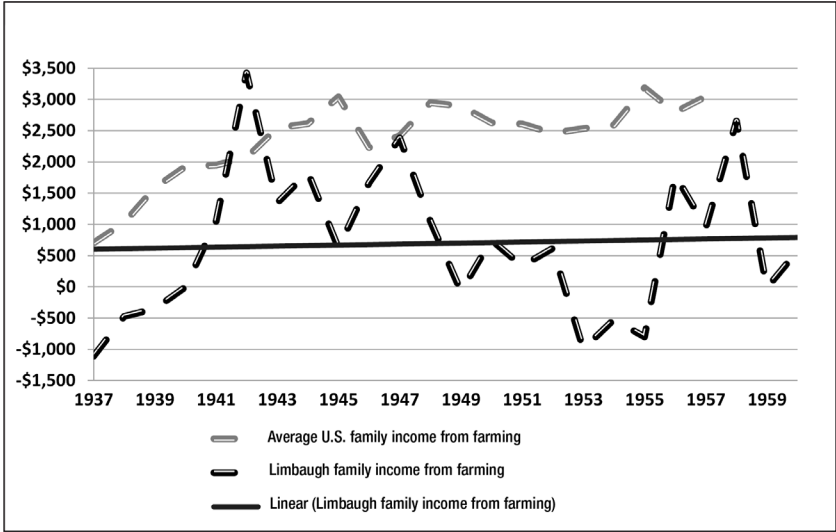


Figure 84 Net Farm Income

Dad said one day “I’m going down and buy a new tractor.” I said, “You’re crazy; how can you do that?” He said, “I’m going down to the bank and ask for the money.” And he headed for Ontario, and on the way stopped by the bank and said: “I’m going to buy a tractor; can I have the money?” They said, “Why sure, Mr. Limbaugh.”

The New Plymouth State Bank was the only bank in town. The tractor purchase was “about the first time we had borrowed any money except from Farm Security because we hadn’t built up enough credit,” she explained. “That’s why I didn’t think Daddy could ever get the money because they knew we were tied up with Farm Security.” But Mr. Green, the manager, was impressed by how Hat had built up farm and was “raising some of the best corn in the Valley.”¹³

This account illustrates not only Evelyn’s pride in her husband’s work, but also her faulty memory. As we have seen, the Limbaughs had borrowed money earlier, both from private and public sources. But Hat did bring home a new farm vehicle, a low-slung rubber-tired Ford utility tractor with a hydraulic lift on the back, easy to use for both field and orchard work.

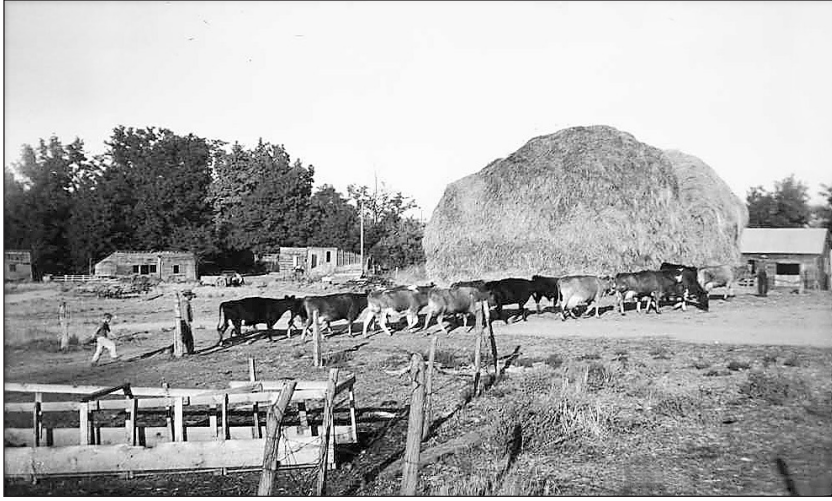


Figure 85 Herding Cows to the Barn

Starting with a couple of cows paid for by a Farm Security loan, the Limbaughs by World War II were milking thirty head of registered Jerseys. Butterfat sales to the Carnation creamery in Payette provided a small but steady income, helping to pay monthly expenses until the corn and prunes were harvested. In 1947 they sold the entire herd and turned toward crop and livestock production.

Less than a month later he had his first and only tractor accident. The local newspaper recorded the incident:

J. H. Limbaugh suffered cracked bones in one foot Monday as the result of a chain reaction which started from a tractor exhaust. Limbaugh was hauling clover at the Joe Campo farm and as he was driving past a combine the exhaust from the machine set fire to the load of clover. He attempted to turn the load around to get away from the exhaust, but the blower fed the flames, causing them to spread to a nearby straw stack which was destroyed along with the load of clover. During the conflagration, Limbaugh jumped from the vehicle he was driving and cracked the bones in one foot.¹⁴

Already weakened by polio, Hat's injured leg took weeks to heal. Afterward he could not bear to put much pressure on it and walked with

a decided limp. But it was spring, and he had work to do. In a few days he was back on the tractor, harrowing and corrugating the cornfield.

Despite his hardnosed determination to continue farming, Hat could not keep up with the pace of change in farming methods and finance. Small, diversified farms in the late 1940s and '50s faded away under the inexorable pressure of consolidation and specialization. On the Limbaugh farm productivity declined precipitously after 1947, and so did farm income. The two prune orchards were almost a total loss as old-fashioned Italian prunes, once popular for drying, disappeared in postwar supermarkets. Hat still grew corn and tried raising livestock, but income from periodically selling a few hogs, lambs, and feeder stock did little more than pay for the cost of feed.

The Limbaugh financial picture mirrored national trends. Average farm income in the U.S. rose from \$993 in 1937 to \$2,068 by 1945, but averaging does not distinguish between large and small farms. As the linear trend line above illustrates, small farmers like the Limbaughs did not keep pace with large commercial farming operations. Over twenty-three years their net income from farming met or exceeded the national average only twice. Most of the time they were far below average and steadily losing ground.¹⁵

Laboring on and off the Farm

Income differences may help determine the size but not the substance of farming operations, especially during the middle decades of the twentieth century when small family farms largely disappeared. The change even altered the definition of "family farm." Before the 1940s a family farm was considered one that could function efficiently without hired labor except during peak harvest. By the 1960s the definition had broadened to include any family-controlled agricultural unit regardless of the type of labor employed. As farm size and income accelerated, and family relationships and living standards changed, it was increasingly difficult to distinguish between hired and family labor.¹⁶

In the Payette Valley the older model of family farming lasted longer than on the Great Plains, where postwar conditions in the Corn Belt made consolidation necessary, or on the dryland wheat fields of



Figure 86 Pigs and Sheep

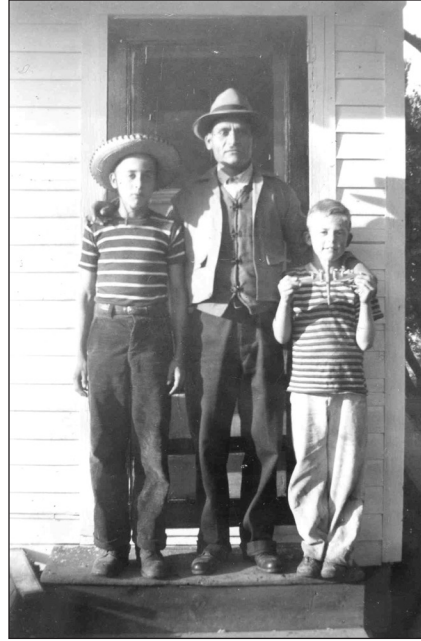
In the postwar years, small, diversified farms faded away under the inexorable pressure of consolidation and specialization. The Limbaughs continued to grow corn and tried raising livestock after auctioning off their milk cows, but income from occasionally selling a few hogs, lambs, and feeder stock did little more than pay for the cost of feed. Fresh fruit revenue also fell as old-fashioned Italian prunes, once popular for drying, disappeared in postwar supermarkets. As farm income dropped along with productivity, Evelyn had to find a job off the farm. After 1947 she was the family's primary source of support.

the inland Pacific Northwest, where diversified agriculture never had a chance to develop. Both regions employed fieldhands to do most of the work, especially when specialized crops had to be harvested all at once. But small farmers could not afford to hire outside labor at \$2 or \$2.50 per day, the going wage in the 1940s. On the Limbaugh farm and others like it, 80 percent of the labor was family labor. Even when their gross income rose during World War II they still didn't earn enough to hire outside help on a regular basis.¹⁷

Regardless of cost, small farmers hired outside workers if perishable crops had to be harvested all at once. Paid seasonal workers contributed up to 20 percent of the farming work force in the 1940s. Most were migrants before 1941, but those were quickly absorbed by the defense industries and the military as America prepared for war. By 1942 the country faced a critical farm labor shortage, which the War Manpower Commission tried to fill by a variety of experiments using students, housewives, mentally ill patients, prisoners, and Mexican workers or "*braceros*." The Bracero Program authorized Mexican farmworkers to

Figure 87 José and Helpers

In 1942 the federal government established the Bracero Program to help relieve the wartime shortage of farmworkers. That fall, from a labor camp near the Oregon border, the Limbaughs hired José Gonzales and several other Mexican nationals to help harvest a bonanza crop of prunes. José was a friendly bilingual farmer from Sonora who soon became the temporary foreman on the Limbaugh farm. Here he is with two “helpers” from the Limbaugh family. Throughout the war years José returned every harvest season under the temporary worker program.



enter the U.S. for temporary employment. It grew quickly from a few thousand workers in 1942 to 45,000 by the end of the war.¹⁸

To help harvest their bumper crop of prunes in 1942, the Limbaugh family hired a dozen braceros from the labor camp at Gateway Junction near the Oregon border. For nearly two weeks the Mexicans worked under the supervision of José Gonzales, an older married farmer who knew enough English to handle the others. At noon every day they came to the big farmhouse for a meal of tortillas, beans, and cottage cheese, prepared to their specifications by Evelyn, the friendly farmer's wife. Whether they understood it or not, she kept up a running conversation in English with José and the “boys,” who stayed in the rental house when not working. For their efforts the Mexicans collected \$1,500 in earnings, or 35 percent of the \$4,200 gross income from prune sales. José stayed behind for a few weeks after the rest left, earning extra dollars as a fieldhand before returning to his family in Mexico. His work so impressed the Limbaughs that they invited him back when the harvest began the following year. Throughout the war years José returned every harvest season under the temporary worker program.¹⁹

In the postwar years hired labor was most common on prosperous farms, but even they suffered from the effects of inflation. Farm costs rose faster than prices for farm commodities. Inflation took away the purchasing power of farm families and drove them further into debt. Small farmers were especially hard hit. If they wanted to continue farming they either had to borrow more money or find ways to supplement their farm income. Some managed to farm and work for wages at the same time, in effect becoming part-time farmers. That often meant leaving other family members to do the routine chores at home while the wage-earner commuted to work in construction, retail, or other industries. In the 1940s at least 10 percent of U.S. farm family household income came from nonfarm sources. By the 1990s, it was 90 percent.²⁰

The erratic income sources of the Limbaugh family were typical of small farmers, at least in the lower Payette Valley. Comparing the trend line on the graph below with the one on the graph above shows how much the Limbaughs depended on other sources of income to smooth out some of the peaks and valleys of their balance sheet. It not only kept them in business after 1949, but it also helped them keep up with the rising economic status of the American middle class.

In the Payette Valley most of the household heads near the Limbaughs were fulltime farmers, but as the 1940 census reveals, some farm family members held jobs away from home. Bill Godschalk Sr. raised grain and prunes just east of the Limbaugh household, while his son operated a service station next door at Hamilton's Corners. Northeast of that junction Mary Rose helped her son operate the family farm after the death of her husband, Garth. South of the Limbaughs, Joe Campo farmed his mother's place while his older brother, Bernard, earned trucker's wages at a construction site. Along Highway 30 to the west, John Bennett and Sanford Brownell both farmed fulltime, but they exchanged work with the Limbaughs during the haying season. So did Everett Palacio, who lived a mile beyond the Bennett place.

Any farmer who milked cows or raised cattle or horses in that era also raised hay. Alfalfa made excellent hay but had to dry in the field after cutting and raking before it could be forked onto wagons and

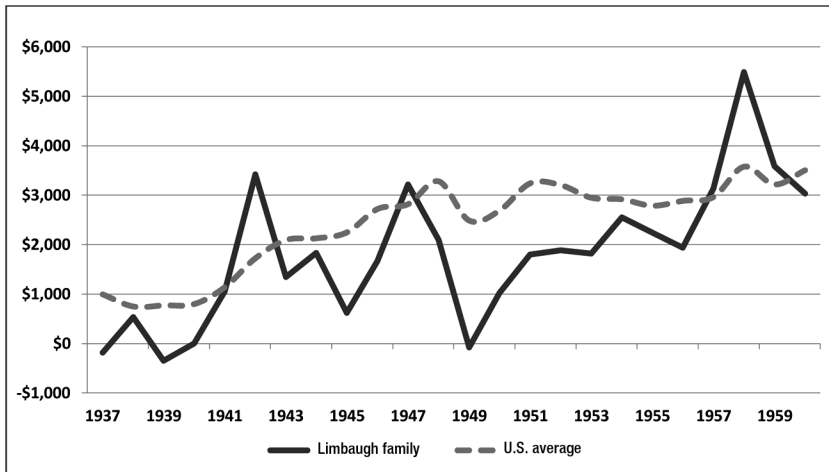


Figure 88 Income from All Sources

hauled to the farmstead for stacking. Among reciprocating farmers, whoever had the driest hay was the first to start the haying cycle for that cutting. Limbaugh and Bennett were too old to be stackers, but Palacio and Brownell were both younger and more active. A stacker had to line up the heavy load of long hay as it dangled over his head and hold it in place long enough to shout “hit it,” and still avoid the dangerous fork on the Mormon derrick as it swung back to the driver on the wagon below. After the first farmer’s hay was stacked the neighborly crew moved on to the next place and repeated the process. In the “banana belt” of the lower Payette Valley, farmers could normally count on three or four cuttings per year.

Occasionally all these neighbors worked for wages if the Limbaughs or other neighbors needed extra help. Evelyn was careful to record every payout in her FSA account book. In June 1937 she paid John Bennett \$2.75 for haying and \$2.50 for planting corn. Bill Godschalk earned \$10 for some work in April 1938. Their neighbor across Highway 30, Alex Conger, worked in May 1938 for \$32, probably using the old iron-wheeled tractor he had sold to the Limbaughs the year before. During the busy month of August that year Bennett, Brownell, Conger, Rose, Godschalk, Palacio, and several others helped thresh wheat and har-

vest the corn crop on the Limbaugh farm for wages of \$1.25 to \$2.25 each per day.²¹

Sharing work among family members or neighbors helped lower the expenses of small farmers but did not increase their income. In an inflationary period, farmers with limited acreage could not raise enough food and fiber to pay the bills, much less raise their standard of living.

Even if they still had good credit, borrowing more to go deeper into debt was not a successful strategy for ordinary farmers. Many had no other choice but take a job off the farm.

Evelyn the Wage-earner

Historian Mary Neth has explored the changing gender roles required to keep poorer farm families solvent. “As family members moved in and out of the wage economy,” she wrote in 1994, “remaining family members had to redivide on farm tasks, encouraging a flexible sexual division of labor.” Gender made little practical difference in distributing the workload on the Limbaugh farm. Because of his disability, Hat had all he could do to manage the stock, irrigate the field crops, and supervise the harvest. Until their sons were old enough to do the work of adults, Evelyn was the only able-bodied fieldhand. She worked like a draft horse, doing jobs normally assigned to men as well as regular household, farmstead, and garden tasks typically considered “women’s work.” In between milking cows twice a day, she raised rabbits and fryers for food and hens for egg sales. In the fields she helped cultivate corn in the spring and prepare the ground in the fall and winter months for planting the next season. Every day she also faced the routine tasks of a traditional farmer’s wife: raising fruit and vegetables for home cooking, baking and canning on a wood stove, washing and ironing, preparing all meals for the family and field crews, and cleaning up afterward. She undermined her own health to serve her husband, but still that was not enough to pay the bills.

On the Limbaugh farm, finding outside sources of income was also Evelyn’s responsibility. Neth observed that “wage work for married women was rare in rural America,” but Evelyn was the exception that



Figure 89 Evelyn in Overalls

Gender made little practical difference in distributing the workload on the Limbaugh farm. Because of his disability, Hat had all he could do to manage the stock, irrigate the field crops, and supervise the harvest. Until their sons were old enough to do the work of adults, Evelyn was the only able-bodied fieldhand. She worked like a draft horse, doing jobs normally assigned to men as well as regular household, farmstead, and garden tasks typically considered “women’s work.” Here she is in her overalls, surveying cattle grazing in the lower pasture.

proved the rule. No stranger to the working world, she had supported herself for a decade as a nurse and schoolteacher before marrying a farmer in 1929. During the Great Depression, she had honed her remarkable people skills as saleswoman after they lost their first farm, peddling extracts on the street and then musical instruments and other retail household goods in a company store.²²

Despite the forty to sixty weekly hours she spent on their Payette Valley farm as housewife and supplemental fieldhand, Evelyn was an active community volunteer. She occasionally substituted for the regular pianist at the local Congregational church. One year she served on the school board, and later led a 4-H group and a Cub Scout troop. In the late 1930s she joined the New Plymouth Grange as pianist and

song leader and stayed involved until the meetings went too long. “I was a great worker in the Grange,” she said later.

We’d go at 8 o’clock when they were supposed to start, and they all got there at nine, after farmers got through milking. [The meeting didn’t begin until all officers arrived and] took their stations.... Then they’d want to stay after 11 o’clock, and Daddy & I didn’t.... We wouldn’t get home until 12 or 1 o’clock; well I was up under the cows at 5 o’clock and Daddy was out irrigating.²³

During the war years Evelyn volunteered as a director and purchasing agent for the Payette County Purchasing Association, an unincorporated cooperative for FSA clients. They paid a membership fee and bought farm supplies collectively through the purchasing agent. In theory, high-volume purchases of seed corn, fertilizer, coal, brooding hens, fryer chicks, trees for windbreaks, and other items lowered costs for all members. In practice it was hardly worth the effort for such a small number of participants.²⁴

Evelyn did most of the work to keep the co-op alive and functioning. She was responsible for collecting orders from members, soliciting bids from distributors, monitoring all sales and distribution, paying all the bills, and keeping all the accounts. Bulk purchases were often shipped by rail and distributed at the tracks in New Plymouth. I remember playing with some other kids on a coal car one year while Evelyn waited for the next customer to sack and weigh the amount ordered. Smaller lots sometimes came directly to the Limbaugh farm for sorting and distribution. Hatchery chicks arrived by the thousands every spring. They needed special handling to stay alive until the farmwives who ordered them could pick them up. The Limbaughs kept them in a barnyard pit covered with canvas surrounded by prunewood fires. Special animal food concentrates needed to be mixed with grain before use. Farmers brought loaded sacks from their own granaries to a stone building behind the Limbaugh farmhouse, where they used a wooden bin to mix the purchased supplement.²⁵

Evelyn’s years with the Purchasing Association “got me around and

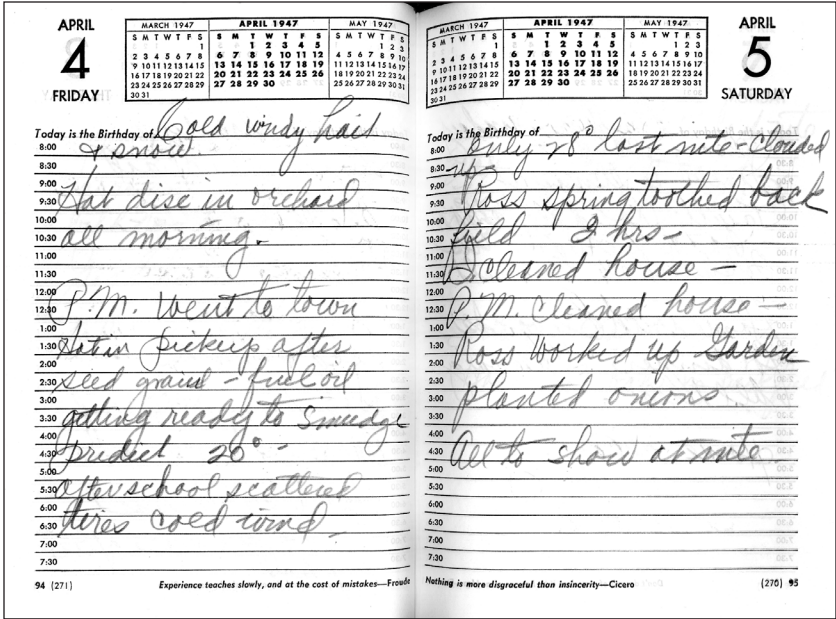


Figure 90 A Typical Farm Day

Evelyn was exhausted after a decade of stress and hard work on the Idaho farm, but carefully hid her condition even from the diaries she occasionally kept. Fortunately their eldest son, Ross, was old enough after the war to assume more adult responsibilities. By the age of thirteen he was working almost as long and hard as an ordinary hired hand. His mother noted his help in her diary on a typical day in 1947.

acquainted with the whole county & the county officers,” she told me later. It also made her a target for complaints. Once she was investigated by the FBI because “somebody reported that I was dealing out chickens and wasn’t paying for them, or I didn’t have enough money, or something like that. When they came I said I’m really glad to have you come and look at my books, because if you find anything wrong with them I’m the first one who wanted to know.”²⁶

Her reward for all this volunteer labor was a 5 percent discount of net savings on collective association purchases, which amounted to less than her gas bill for frequent trips to the FSA office in Payette.

Evelyn’s stamina and strength of character in the face of her husband’s limitations kept them viable as an economic unit during the war years but took a toll on her physical and emotional health. Always

a “nervous person,” as she confided later, she was exhausted after a decade of stress and hard work on the Idaho farm. Fortunately, their eldest son, Ross, was old enough after the war to assume more adult responsibilities. By the age of thirteen he was working almost as long and hard as an ordinary hired hand. His help relieved some of Evelyn’s farmwork but not the need to boost their declining income after selling their dairy cows. They lived on crop sales and credit for a few years, then in 1949 cashed in on rising real estate values by refinancing.

The new and larger mortgage only added pressure on Evelyn, the real boss of the family and the chief financial officer. By 1951 “I was a nervous wreck,” she told me later. “The problem was I sort of carried the burden of everything. It was my problem to stabilize the family. ... It just built up where I could hardly stand it.” Sinus trouble, hypoglycemia, and lower back problems contributed to her stress. “I had a lot of things the matter with me,” she explained. She sought medical help for her physical ailments, but nothing available at the time could relieve her shattered nerves. Tearfully she recalled the emotional crisis that many farm housewives in similar circumstances must have felt:

I had so much responsibility ... and the idea was to never let anybody see the responsibility. You can’t hold anything for an indefinite period of time without [it] doing something to you.... As I look back on it I don’t think I was very irrational lots of times because I was fighting to stabilize everything, and anything that would deter me from keeping things on a level would just upset me to no end ... it got to me that your father left too much responsibility on me. [One] day I said “I cannot be your legs for you another time.” When I said that I realized all the physical things I had done.”²⁷

After more than a twenty-year absence, Evelyn said she went back to teaching “because I was mentally disturbed.” Leaving the farm for a grade-school classroom relieved both her mental stress and the family’s financial difficulties. For five years she commuted to a school in Fruitland and brought home a monthly paycheck, even though she

continually had to upgrade her provisional credential to keep the job.

In the meantime Hat kept on farming, even though Ross in 1951 left the farm after high school graduation and began a new life in the city—following a familiar path that millions of farm kids had taken before. His father was deeply disappointed. Though it was never openly discussed, he loved farming and wanted Ross to continue the family tradition. Even while his physical health declined Hat wanted to hold on long enough for his two sons to take over. Evelyn was more realistic. She realized that neither son was interested in a farming career. “Oh, they’ll get over this,” he once told her, but she thought otherwise. “Now, Daddy, they may not get over it,” she remembered telling him. “If they don’t want to farm let’s not be disappointed.” He never talked about it again.²⁸

Their second son followed his older brother’s footsteps. After high school graduation in 1955 I joined the U.S. Army “to see the world,” as I always told my friends, but only got as far as Fort Knox, Kentucky. Later that year Dad had the first of a series of heart attacks that eventually took his life. A year after I had joined I left active duty on a hardship discharge and came home to take over the few farm chores that were left until Mom and Dad could decide what to do next with their lives. They tried renting 40 acres for a year, but the income barely paid the taxes, and Dad couldn’t stand to see renters take so little care of the land that he had worked so hard to build up. Selling was the only other option. “Daddy was reconciled to selling it,” she remembered, but he wasn’t happy moving. He wanted to be on a farm “even if he just had to sit.” After a series of miss-steps with several different buyers, the Limbaughs eventually sold out and moved to Caldwell.²⁹

In the interim the Fruitland School Board pressured Evelyn to complete work for a full credential—the same problem she had faced thirty years earlier in Oregon. They hoped to live off their equity after selling the farm, but until the last parcel closed escrow they needed supplemental income. She quit teaching in 1955 and decided to take up an old, familiar occupation: retail sales. For a time she sold children’s books, taking advantage of the numerous friends and acquaintances she had built up over the years. Then in 1958 her Buick dealer in Caldwell, Leo

J. Mason, bravely invited her to join his sales staff—the first woman to hold that job, she proudly recalled years later. With money from the farm sale they bought an old apartment house in Caldwell, renovating the basement so they could live comfortably while watching over three apartments upstairs. My father sat and rocked and read while she sold cars. She did quite well for two years, but the newness wore off quickly. In 1960 she landed a less stressful job in the public library near their home. The new assignment began on 1 June, just sixteen days before her husband died in his sleep at the age of sixty-seven. He could finally rest in peace, but she was ten years younger. She still had fifteen years of employment ahead of her—and thirty-six years of widowhood. But at least she remembered the farm years with pride. She had labored well and truly for her “Daddy,” and she had no regrets.

Epilogue

Farming ended fifty years ago for my immediate family. Only the little barn my grandfather built still stands on the property where I grew up. The big old house is gone—burned down in a spectacular fire a few years after we moved away. So are the trees, gardens, corrals, and even the concrete wall that stood between the house and highway. Time and earthmovers have changed nearly everything that once represented the old French place.

Exploring your own family history is a subjective journey. For the first seventeen years of my life I knew nothing but the family farm. Before I left it I remember my last walk through the back forty. I was conflicted by a love-hate relationship: I loved the land but hated the work required to earn a living from it.

My ambivalence is perhaps the inevitable consequence of growth and maturity. After a long career in education and a fifty-year marriage, I have forgotten most of the details of farming in the 1940s and early '50s, but I still remember its primary lessons: plan ahead; don't expect miracles; and make what you have last as long as possible. The emphasis on frugality and common sense was indicative of the hard life common to small farming communities like New Plymouth during the Great Depression and World War II. That era seems far distant from the present, with its social safety net and high level of material culture.

Frederick Jackson Turner, an influential 19th-century history, added another perspective on small farming. He believed pioneer farmers who cleared and cultivated land on the fringes of settlement were rugged individualists, self-reliant and independent, America's first democrats. That view is no longer fashionable. Indeed, modern scholars are more likely to find the origins of individualism in the rise of cities, where family life broke down under the stress of job competition and social alienation. That seemed to be the fate of the Limbaugh and Mortimore families. Though they tried to hold on to tradition, when they left the farm they gradually lost the old family ties.

Comparing past and present highlights two underlying themes found throughout this book. One is the contrast between expectations and outcomes that often characterize family farming. Another is the continuity of fundamental values and beliefs—despite constantly changing external circumstances—that passed from generation to generation of Limbaughs and Mortimores. The more we study family history the more complex it seems. To simplify the past by reducing it to a set of particular themes or values that are easy to understand is bad history. But we can still learn something from looking into the fog of our own ancestry. We may never clear away all the mysteries, but at least we may be able to build a bridge that connects the people and events from the distant past with our own thoughts and values. Academics still debate whether nature or nurture has the most influence on our personalities. Every thoughtful person should ask the same question. Before you do, however, you need to know as much as possible about your family's heritage.

Notes

Unless otherwise stated, all family correspondence, interviews, and other documentary records are located in the Limbaugh-Mortimore Family Papers, Oregon Historical Society, Portland, Oregon.

Introduction

1. Michael Johnston Grant, *Down and Out on the Family Farm: Rural Rehabilitation in the Great Plains, 1929–1945* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 3.
2. Voltaire is quoted in an old student guide by Robert V. Daniels: *Studying History, How and Why* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall [1966]), 89. The Ford line comes from Dixon Wecker, *Hero in America* (New York: Scribner, 1941), 420. Mailer's opinions were published in *Time* (1983). The Russian proverb is from the *Gulag Archipelago* by Alexander Solzhenitsyn.
3. Crane Brinton, *Ideas & Men, The Story of Western Thought*, 2nd edn. (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1963), 2.

Chapter 1 Old World to New: The Early Mortimores

1. For an example of recent Mortimer-Mortimore scholarship in Britain, see Ian Mortimer's website at <http://www.mortimer.co.uk/family/medieval.htm>.
2. See <http://www.192.com/all/search/>.
3. George F. Black, *The Surnames of Scotland: Their Origin, Meaning, and History* (Edinburgh: Brinn, 1996), 613.
4. Ian Mortimer, "The Medieval Mortimer Family," online at <http://www.mortimer.co.uk/family/medieval.htm>. See also Walter P. Hall and Robert G. Albion, *A History of England and the British Empire*, 3rd edn. (Boston: Ginn, 1953), 171–202; Douglas Richardson, *Plantagenet Ancestry: A Study in Colonial and Medieval Families* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2004), 520–27.
5. Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steele Commager, *Growth of the American Republic*, 4th edn. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 1:66–69.
6. Voyages database, <http://www.ask.com/>; Peter Wilson Coldham, *The Complete Book of Emigrants, 1607–1776*. 4 vols. (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1987–93).
7. *Colonial and State Records of North Carolina*, 4:333–34; 22:825 (hereafter CSRNC).
8. Billy Kennedy, Scots-Irish in the Carolinas [lecture], online at www.strom.clemson.edu/; Louis B. Wright, "The Westward Advance of the Atlantic Frontier," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 11

- (May 1948): 268; Forrest McDonald and Ellen S. McDonald, "Ethnic Origins of the American People, 1790," *William & Mary Quarterly* 37 (April 1980): 181–83; William Henry Foote, *History of the Presbyterians in North Carolina*, extracts in CSRNC, 5:1214; R. D. W. Connor, *History of North Carolina*, vol. 1: *The Colonial and Revolutionary Periods, 1584–1783* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1919), 167–68; Jethro Rumble, *A History of Rowan County, North Carolina* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2001 [1881]), 69; Ruth Blackwelder, "Settlement and Early History," in *Orange County, 1752–1952*, ed. by Hugh Lefler and Paul Wagner (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Orange Printshop, 1953), 14–16.
9. Janie Revill, *A Compilation of the Original Lists of Protestant Immigrants to South Carolina, 1763–1773* (Columbia, S.C., 1996 [1939]), 5–99.
 10. Connor, *History of North Carolina*, 1:155–58; Paul D. Escott and Jeffrey J. Crow, "Social Order and Violent Disorder: An Analysis of North Carolina in the Revolution and the Civil War," *Journal of Southern History* 52, (August 1986): 383–93.
 11. Letter from James Reed to Philip Bearcroft, 26 June 1760, in *Colonial and State Records of North Carolina*, 6:264–66.
 12. Frederick B. Tolles, "The Transatlantic Quaker Community in the 17th Century," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 14 (May 1951): 250; Ned C. Landsman, "Ethnicity and National Origin among British Settlers in the Philadelphia Region," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 133 (June 1989): 173.
 13. Jo White Linn, *Rowan County, North Carolina, Tax Lists 1757–1800* (Salisbury, N.C.: Rowan Public Library, n.d.), 75.
 13. *Ibid.*, 75. In 1741–42, Private William Mortimore, a soldier belonging to either a Virginia or Carolina unit of Col. Gooch's Regiment, participated in the abortive British-American expedition against Cartagena, and on December 6, 1742, was "D[ischarged] . . . [from ship] Seahorse." Murtie June Clark, *Colonial Soldiers of the South, 1732–1774* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1983), 219.
 14. Louis B. Wright, *Culture on the Moving Frontier* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955).
 15. Sallie W. Stockard, *History of Guilford County, North Carolina* (Greensboro, N.C.: Guilford County Genealogical Society, 1983 [1902]), 3.
 16. Joffre Lanning Coe, "The Formative Cultures of the Carolina Piedmont," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 54, no. 5 (1964): 18; Blackwelder, "Settlement and Early History," 14–16.
 17. Escott and Crow, "Social Order and Violent Disorder," 381–82; A. Roger Ekirch, "Poor Carolina": *Politics and Society in Colonial North Carolina, 1729–1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 6–8, 11–12, 164–66, 218–20; Lefler and Wager, *Orange County, 1752–1952*, 26–40.
 18. Stockard, *History of Guilford County*, 1–2; Blackwelder, "Settlement and Early History," 17.
 19. Robert O. DeMond, *The Loyalists in North Carolina during the Revolution* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998 [1940]), 180, 243–45; Sally's Family Place, online at www.sallysfamilyplace.com/Neighbors/.
 20. Hofmann, *North Carolina Abstracts of State Grants*, introduction by George Stevenson; Rumble, *History of Rowan County*, 33–34.
 21. North Carolina General Assembly, Land Grant Act, 15 Nov. 1777, in *Colonial and State Records of North Carolina*, 24:43; Margaret M. Hofmann, *North Carolina Abstracts of State Grants*, 1:179–86.
 22. Stockard, *History of Guilford County*, 4–5. See note 26 for a list of those receiving patents in 1778 and 1779, plus others within a five-mile radius of the Mortimore property. Note the one female on the list. The original claimant may have died before the patent was recorded, or she may have claimed land in her own name, as the law allowed. Of these surnames, 31 are Scots or Scots-Irish, 14 are Irish, 6 Welsh, 45 English, and 10 non-British. Because of overlapping ethnicities, some are categorized in more than one column. Ned C. Landsman reviewed some of these vague "mechanisms of integration" in "Ethnicity and National Origin among British Settlers in the Philadelphia Region," 170–74.
 23. Camille Wells, "The Planter's Prospect: Houses, Outbuildings, and Rural Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," *Winterthur Portfolio* 28 (Spring 1993): 5.

24. The following 95 heads of families in this study are listed chronologically by date of grant deed or earliest listing in public documents: Robert HARRIS 1754; William JAMES 1754; William JONES 1754; Peter KING Jr. 1754; Thomas RUTLEDGE 1754; Charles FOOSHE 1756; William MARTIN 1756; Joseph OZBURN (Osborn) 1756; Nicholas ROBINSON (Roberson) 1756; John BRALY 1757; Hugh DOBBIN 1757; John FERGUSON 1757; Dudley RUNALDS 1757; William PARRY 1759; John ROBINSON 1761; James REAVES 1767; Alan JONES 1770; William ROBINSON (Roberson) 1770; John CLARK 1772; Archibald CAMPBELL 1776; John CAMPBELL 1776; John ANDERSON 1778; Robert ARWIN 1778; James BARR 1778; James BELL 1778; Hugh BLAIR 1778; Thomas BLAIR (Blear) 1778; Charles BRUCE 1778; Moses CAMPBELL 1778; Patrick DIMON (Diamond) 1778; James HAYS 1778; John HIATT HEIRS 1778; Samuel MCCRACKIN 1778; Hannah McCORRY 1778; Archibald MCINTYRE 1778; Robert MCKEMIC (McKamie) 1778; John OAR (Orr) 1778; James OLIPHANT 1778; David PEEBLES (Peeples) 1778; John STRAIN 1778; James STUART (Stewart) 1778; Samuel THOMPSON 1778; John WHITE 1778; William WHITE 1778; Zachariah WILLIAMSON 1778; Robert WRIGHT 1778; Francis WRIGHT (Clark?) 1778; John BLAIR (Blear) 1779; Benjamin BRITAIN (Britton) 1779; James CALHOUN (Calhoon) 1779; Cain CARRELL 1779; John CUMMING 1779; John FLEMING 1779; Evan JONES 1779; James LEEPER 1779; Robert MCKENZIES 1779; William MORTIMER (Mortimore) 1779; Nathan PEEBLES 1779; Isaac PERRIMAN 1779; Upton WILLIAMSON (Williams) 1779; Thomas WINCHESTER 1779; John WRIGHT 1779; Joseph BLAIR 1780; George CUMMINGS 1780; Abraham ENDSLEY 1780; Andrew ENDSLEY 1780; John ENDSLEY JR 1780; Archibald McMICHAEL 1780; Alexander NELSON 1780; George NELSON 1780; George PEARCE 1780; Isaac WRIGHT 1780; Francis CLARK 1782; Frederick DILL 1782; John HOLADAY 1782; John KIMBOLEE (Kimbrough?) 1782; James LEASY 1783; Peter STEPHEN 1783; John TATUM (Tatom) 1783; Strangeman STANLEY 1784; William WICKER 1784; James HUNT 1785; William LEMMOND 1785; Walter MILEHAM 1787; George RAYLE (Rale) (Rayl) 1787; Edward TATUM (Tatom) 1787; John NELSON 1788; Alexander McMICHAEL 1789; Peter CLEMENTS 1790; William DIAMOND 1790; Daniel DENNIS 1791; William DENNIS JR. 1791; William OGBURN 1798; Mordecai CLOUD nd; John NICKLES (NICHOLS) nd. This list was compiled from several sources, including *Colonial and State Records of North Carolina*; Hoffman, *North Carolina Abstracts of State Grants*, vol. 1; Nancy Hawlick Stein and Mary Powell Hammersmithy, *Old Guilford North Carolina, Court Minutes 1781–88 & Genealogical Implications of the Laws in Effect* (Hartford, Ky.: McDowell, 1978); Elizabeth “Pat” Shaw Bailey, *Guilford County, North Carolina Land Grants, 1778–1934* (Signal Mountain, Tenn., c. 1993; [2001]); Irene B. Webster, *Guilford County, North Carolina Will Abstracts 1771–1841* (priv. pub. by compiler, c. 1979); William D. Bennett, *Guilford County Deed Book One* (Raleigh, N.C.: n.p., 1990); A. B. Pruitt, *Abstracts of Deeds, Guilford Co., N.C., Books 3, 4, 5, & 6* (privately printed by author, c. 2002); Guilford County Court of Pleas, 1781–1790, online at www.greensboro-nc.gov/.
25. Lloyd DeWitt Bockstruck, *Virginia's Colonial Soldiers* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1988), 337.
26. Brent H. Holcomb, *Marriages of Rowan County, North Carolina, 1753–1868* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2001 [1981]), 257; *Guilford County Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, 1781–91*; Stockard, *History of Guilford County*, 24; 1790 Federal Census, Guilford County.
27. Connor, *History of North Carolina*, 1:455–85.
28. Robert C. Pugh, “The Revolutionary Militia in the Southern Campaign, 1780–81,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 14 (April 1957): 168–75.
29. Letter from Charles Cornwallis, Marquis Cornwallis, to George Sackville Germain, Viscount Sackville, 17 March 1781, in *CSRNC*, 17:999.
30. Cornwallis to Germain, 17 March 1781, *CSRNC*, 17:1001; Connor, *History of North Carolina*, 1:484–94.
31. Letter from Armand Armstrong to Thomas Burke, 20 Aug. 1781; “Declaration by John Allison Concerning his Military Service in the Revolutionary War”; both in *CSRNC*, 22:103, 145–46; John R. Maass, “Impressment and Conscription in Revolutionary North Carolina,” *Journal of Military History* 73 (October 2009): 1110–11. Quaker problems are described in Stephen B. Weeks, *Southern Quakers and Slavery* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1896), 184–86.

32. Minutes of the Provincial Congress of North Carolina, 7 September 1775, *CSRNC*, 10:196–200; Hugh Jameson, “Subsistence for Middle-State Militia, 1776–1781,” *Military Affairs* 30 (Winter 1966): 123.
33. Minutes of the Provincial Congress of North Carolina, 7 September 1775, April 1776, in *CSRNC*, 10:196–200, 10:596.
34. Maass, “Impressment and Conscription,” 1110–11; Escott and Crow, “Social Order and Violent Disorder,” 385; James Martin to Richard Caswell, 11 June 1778; Declaration by James Martin Concerning His Military Service in the Revolutionary War, 17 October 1832, both in *CSRNC*, 13:159; 22:145–50.
35. Return of the Salisbury District Militia, 13 July 1780, 14:874; Minutes of the Provincial Congress of North Carolina 4 April 1776–14 May 1776, 10:546; Declaration by Westwood Armistead Concerning His Military Service in the Revolutionary War [Extract], 5 March 1844, 22:106–7; all in *CSRNC*.
36. Thomas D. Clark, *Frontier America: The Story of the Westward Movement*, 2nd edn. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1969), 91–92, 110–12.
37. Petition from the Regulators concerning public fees, May 1768, in *CSRNC* 7:733–37; *Guilford County, N.C. Soldiers of the Revolutionary War*, online at <http://files.usgwarchives.org/nc/guilford/military/>; U.S. National Archives, Revolutionary War Service Records, 1775–83.
38. Stockard, *History of Guilford County*, 24; Revolutionary War Service Records, 1775–83, LDS Archives online database, Orem, Utah; Declaration by James Martin, 17 October 1832, 149; Otho Holland Williams, “Return of Casualties in the Battle of Guilford Court House, 15 March 1781,” *CSRNC*, 17:1038.
39. Pension application of Peter King, U.S. National Archives Microfilm, online at <http://files.usgwarchives.net/>.
40. “List of Inhabitants of Granville County Who Took the Oath of Allegiance ...” 22 May 1778; Relief Act of 10 May 1780; Militia Act of January 1781; all in *CSRNC*, 22:168; 24:229, 24:358; Escott and Crow, “Social Order and Violent Disorder,” 385.
41. Stockard, *History of Guilford County*, 56; Cornelius O. Cathey, “Agricultural Implements in North Carolina, 1783–1860,” *Agricultural History* 25 (July 1951): 128–29.
42. Thomas Baldwin, *A New and Complete Gazetteer of the United States* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Co., 1854), 454; Charles E. Landon, “The Tobacco Growing Industry in North Carolina,” *Economic Geography* 10 (July 1934): 239–43.
43. Stockard, *History of Guilford County*, 55–61.
44. On the importance of shoe leather during the war, see William Dent to North Carolina Board of War, 17 October 1780, 14:428; Cornwallis to Clinton, 10 April 1781, 17:1010–12; both in *CSRNC*. For Piedmont pottery and native sites, see Coe, “Formative Cultures,” 8–34. The family pottery reference comes from Eve B. Goeken’s database.
45. Extracts from Pierre Egron, “The Level, or Europe and America,” *Columbian Gazette* [Washington, D.C.] 13 Nov. 1794, 1–2.
46. *National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser* [Washington, D.C.], 5 April 1802, 3; *American Telegraph* [Newfield, Fairfield Co., Conn.], 20 March 1796, 4; *Richmond Enquirer*, 30 March 1805, 1.
47. *Daily National Intelligencer* [Washington, D.C.], 18 Dec. 1820.
48. *American Telegraph*, 20 March 1796, 4.
49. Charles Frederick Holder, *The Quakers in Great Britain and America* (New York: Neuner, 1913), 542; “An Act to Prevent Domestic Insurrections, and for Other Purposes” (1777), in *CSRNC*, 24:14; Louis Thomas Jones, *The Quakers of Iowa* (Ph.D. Thesis, Iowa City: State University of Iowa, 1914), 35–37.
50. Pruitt, *Abstracts of Deeds, Guilford Co.*, nos. 4841, 4850, 5345, 30 June 1808, 14, 15, 67.

Chapter 2 The Limbaugh Line: Origins of a Western Branch

1. N. Clifford and Anna P. Smith, *Encyclopedia of German-American Genealogical Research* (New York: Bowker, 1976), 101; “18th Century PA German Naming Customs,” online at <http://www.kerchner.com/germname.htm>.

2. Noble Limbaugh correspondence in RHL family archives; Richard Hofer to RHL, May 10, 2006, in RHL family archives.
3. Kirchenbuch Record of Baptisms, Marriages, Deaths, Hüffenhardt, Mosbach, Baden, 1588–1826, Lutheran collection, FHL Film 1189311; Reinsberg Church Record of Baptisms, Marriages, Deaths, 1514–1724, Württemberg collection, FHL Film 1433083. The male direct ancestry of Michael goes back three generations to 1) Hanß Limpach/Lymbach (abt. 1605–91); 2) Johann Caspar Lymbach (1645–March 1690/91); 3) Johann Michael Lymbach: (1680–abt. 1730). The children of Michael and Catharina, all born and baptised in Hüffenhardt, begins with Anna Margaretha Lymbach (21 May 1702/ ___); Jörg Bernhardt Lymbach (13 June 1704/___); Johann Georg Lymbach (27 August 1706/30 July 1707); Johannes Lymbach (20 June 1708/Penn. 12 August 1769); Maria Catharina Lymbach (9 August 1711/10August–September? 1713); Johann Georg Lymbach (22 June 1713/___); Maria Catharina Lymbach (17 May 1715/1744); Johann [Hanß] Michael Lymbach (January 1717/? 11 April 1793); Johann Frederick Lymbach (#1) (February 1719/1 August 1719); Eva Rosina Lymbach (18 September 1720/Germany? 17 May 1799); Johann Christian Lymbach (23 October 1722/___) Johann Friderich Lymbach (#2) (17 April 1724/___).
4. John U. Nef, “Wars and the Rise of Industrial Civilization,” *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 10 (February 1944): 39; Charles M. Hall, *The Atlantic Bridge to Germany*, vol. 1 (Logan, Utah: Everton, n.d.), 1–2.
5. Some genealogists have mistakenly added a middle name, identifying him as “Johannes Michael Limbach.” But Johannes was rarely used as a spiritual name, and the baptismal record for Johannes does not show a middle name. See Kirchenbuch Record of Baptisms... 1723, FHL Film 1189311.
6. Christopher R. Friedrichs, “Capitalism, Mobility, and Class Formation in the Early Modern German City,” *Past and Present* 69 (November 1979): 24–49; *Pennsylvania German Immigrants, 1709–1786*, ed. by Don Yoder (Baltimore, Genealogical Publishing Co. 1984), 9–11; John Knodel, “Two and a Half Centuries of Demographic History in a Bavarian Village,” *Population Studies* 24 (November 1970), 367; W.R. Lee, “Bastardy and the Socioeconomic Structure of South Germany,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 7 (Winter 1977): 403–25; John Knodel, “Natural Fertility in Pre-Industrial Germany,” *Population Studies* 32 (November 1978): 481–510; Sarah Hanley, “Engendering the State: Family Formation and State Building in Early Modern France,” *French Historical Studies* 16 (Spring 1989): 9–12; Ulinka Rublak, “Pregnancy, Childbirth, and the Female Body in Early Modern Germany,” *Past and Present* 150 (February 1996): 84–110; Kathleen Crowther-Heyck, “Be Fruitful and Multiply”: Genesis and Generation in Reformation Germany, *Renaissance Quarterly* 55 (Autumn 2002): 904–35.
7. Ralph Beaver Strassburger and William J. Hinke, *Pennsylvania German Pioneers: A Publication of the Original Lists of Arrivals in the Port of Philadelphia from 1727 to 1808*, vol. 1 (Norristown, Penn.: Pennsylvania German Society, 1934), 550–55; Marianne S. Wokek, “German and Irish Immigration to Colonial Philadelphia,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 133 (June 1989), 128–33. I am indebted to Teva Scheer, a Canadian scholar currently developing a typology of southwest German village life. She confirmed the Lymbach family departure from Hüffenhardt on 28 May 1753, as documented in a community history she has access to (but which I have not seen) by Hans Luckhaupt, *900 Jahre Hüffenhardt* (Gemeinde Hüffenhardt, 1983), 165–67. Her finely crafted monograph was published recently as *Our Daily Bread: German Village Life, 1500–1850* (North Saanich, B.C.: Adventis Press, 2010).
8. W.W.H. Davis, *History of Bucks County* (Doylestown, Penn.: Democratic Book and Job Office, 1876), 711–12.
9. Glatfelter, *Pastors and People*, 308–36; Dueffendoerffer Land deed summary sheet, 7 December 1768, Lower Milford Twp, Lehigh Co., in Schwenckfelder Library, Pennsburg, Penn.
10. William J. Hinke, *A History of the Goshenhoppen Reformed Charge, 1727–1819* (Lancaster, Penn.: Penn. German Soc., 1920). For Protestant doctrinal differences in southwest Germany, see Carl E. Schneider, “The Genius of the Reformed Church in the United States: A Genetic Appraisal of Her Union with the Evangelical Synod of North America,” *Journal of Religion* 15 (January 1935): 26–41.

11. Quoted in Charles R. Roberts et al., *History of Lehigh County, Pennsylvania*, vol. 1 (Allentown, Penn.: Lehigh Valley Publishing Co., 1914), 804–5. See also *Pastors and People*, 14–18.
12. Glatfelter, *Pastors and People*, 162–63; 247–60.
13. Alfred Mathews, *History of the Counties of Lehigh and Carbon, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Everts & Richards, 1884), 363.
14. For the Ritter and Limbach land transactions, see *The Journals and Papers of David Schultze*. Vol. 2, 1761–1797. Translated and edited by Andrew S. Berky (Pennsburg, Penn.: Schwenckfelder Library, 1953), 9–10. I am grateful to Noble Limbaugh of Anniston, Alabama, for providing me with a copy of Frederick's 1770 deed, now located in the Schwenckfelder Library.
15. Francis S. Fox, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Ordeal of the American Revolution in Northampton County, Pennsylvania* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000). Using colonial, state, and local resources heretofore overlooked or neglected, the book is rich in descriptive detail.
16. Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The Colonial Experience* (New York: Random House, 1958); Davis, *History of Bucks County*, 443.
17. Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steele Commager, *The Growth of the American Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), 193–95, 238; F. Ellis, *History of Northampton County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: P. Fritts, 1877), 57; Davis, *History of Bucks County*, 442.
18. William H. Engle, ed., *Pennsylvania in the War of the Revolution, Associated Battalions and Militia, 1775–1783* (Harrisburg, Penn.: E. K. Meyers, 1888), 2:547–616.
19. Ellis, *History of Northampton County*, 58.
20. Engle, *Pennsylvania in the War of the Revolution*, 2:613; Ellis, *History of Northampton County*, 59; Matthew Forney Steele, *American Campaigns* (Washington, D.C.: Combat Forces Press, 1951), 1:14–16.
21. Thomas Lynch Montgomery, ed., *Muster Rolls Relating to the Associators and Militia of the County of Northampton*. Pennsylvania Archives, Fifth Series (Harrisburg, Penn.: Harrisburg Publishing Co., 1906), 8:102–3; Fox, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 84.
22. Gaylord Griffiths, *An Alphabetized Listing of Those Subscribers to the Oaths of Allegiance, Northampton County, Pa., 1778–1784* (Apollo, Penn.: Closson Press, 1992), 1, 43.
23. Howard W. Kriebel, *The Schwenckfelders in Pennsylvania: A Historical Sketch* (Lancaster, Penn.: Pennsylvania German Society, 1904), 154–55; Fox, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 86, 147; Richard B. Morris, ed., *Encyclopedia of American History*, rev. edn. (New York: Harper, 1961), 110.
24. Fox, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 85, 92, 95, 152–53.
25. *Ibid.*, 147–56.
26. Wyoming Valley Massacre, from Wikipedia, at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wyoming_Massacre.
27. Autograph statement, Fred. Leimbach [to General Assembly], [9 April] 1782, *Records of Pennsylvania's Revolutionary Governments 1775–1790* (Record Group 27) in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Roll 19, Frame 649.
28. For the Moravian trek to North Carolina, see Laurel Miller, *Leinbachs in America: The First Five Generations* (Sinking Spring, Penn.: Westlawn Graphic, 2002). One reason given for leaving Pennsylvania was because “Oley is too worldly.” Fred Marshall to Seidel, 31 October 1764, Bethlehem Archives as cited in Moravian vertical files in the History and Genealogy Department, Rowan County Library, Salisbury, North Carolina.
29. John B. Frantz, “The Awakening of Religion among the German Settlers in the Middle Colonies,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 33, no. 2 (April 1976): 276–81; Glatfelter, *Pastors and People*, 65–133; Fox, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 85–86, 89–91, 94–95.
30. Samuel Kriebel Brecht, ed., *The Genealogical Record of the Schwenckfelder Families* (New York: Rand McNally for the Schwenckfelder Church, 1923), 349.
31. Kriebel, *The Schwenckfelders in Pennsylvania*, 152.
32. George Kriebel declaration, 1777 (autograph statement), in Kriebel Papers, VS 15, Schwenckfelder Library, Pennsburg, Penn.
33. Autograph letter (copy), Frederick Limbach to Keeper of Easton Gaol, 18 July 1777, in *Records of Pennsylvania's Revolutionary Governments, 1775–1790* (Record Group 27), Pennsylvania State Archives, microfilm Roll 12, frame 569.

34. Fox, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 88.
35. Statement of Henry Funk, ca. August 8, 1777 (autograph), in Kriebel papers, VS 15, Schwenckfelder Library.
36. Letter (draft), Supreme Executive Council to Frederick Limbach, 15 August 1777, in Record Group 27, Pennsylvania State Archives, microfilm Roll 12, frame 789.
37. Holograph letter, A.L. Robeson to Frederick Limbach, 22 February 1778, document 20 197, Schwenckfelder Library, Pennsylvania, Penn.; Kriebel, *The Schwenckfelders in Pennsylvania*, 155; Fox, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 87–88.
38. Copy of Appeal, July 30, 1778, oversize handwritten document in Marx Room, # H091 M294b No. 23, Easton Public Library. At the edge of the document, handwritten but not by Frederick: “frederick Limbach Received on Execution against Henry funk for £40. He is of the 2nd Battalion.” See also Joseph Mortimer Levering, *A History of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 1741–1892* (Bethlehem, Penn.: Times Publishing Co., 1903), 501–2.
39. Fox, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 88–95; Steele, *American Campaigns*, 17–18.
40. Subpoena in the case of Frederick Leimbach [sic], *John Schnell and Nicholas Miller v. Henry Funk*, returned 6 September 1781, in Northampton County Archives, Easton.
41. Montgomery, *Muster Rolls*, 550; *Minute Book 1783–84*, Pennsylvania General Assembly, Record Group 7, Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg; Pennsylvania General Assembly roster, 1783–84, at <http://wilkes-fs1.wilkes.edu/~hcox/legis/indexlegis.html>; O.S. Ireland, “The Crux of Politics: Religion and Party in Pennsylvania, 1778–1789,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 42, no. 4 (October 1985): 455.
42. Montgomery, *Muster Rolls*, 35–36, 50–51, 62, 303–65; William H. Egle, *State of the Accounts of the County Lieutenants during the War of the Revolution, 1777–1789* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Clarence M. Busch, 1896), 2:719–78; Henry F. Marx, *Oaths of Allegiance of Northampton County, Pennsylvania, 1777–1784 ... from Original Lists of John Arndt, Recorder of Deeds, 1777–1800* (Easton, Penn.: Easton Public Library, 1932), 15–18; 50–55; Mathews, *History of the Counties of Lehigh and Carbon*, 363; Charles O. Calomiris, “Institutional Failure, Monetary Scarcity, and the Depreciation of the Continental,” *Journal of Economic History* 48, no. 1 (March 1988): 54–59.
43. *The Journals and Papers of David Schultze*, 2:161; Arthur J. Alexander, “Service by Substitute in the Militia of Northampton and Lancaster Counties (Pennsylvania) during the War of the Revolution,” *Military Affairs* 9, no. 3 (Autumn 1945): 278–82.
44. Mathews, *History of the Counties of Lehigh and Carbon*, 363.

Chapter 3 From Pennsylvania to the South: The Limbaughs, 1787–1815

1. William J. Hinke and Charles E. Kemper, “Moravian Diaries of Travels through Virginia,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 12 (October 1904): 143; William H. Gehrke, “The Ante-Bellum Agriculture of the Germans in North Carolina,” *Agricultural History* 9 (July 1935): 143; Carol McGinnis, *Virginia Genealogy: Sources & Resources* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1993), 15.
2. Maps of the Great Wagon Road and its alternate routes in 1751 and 1784 can be viewed online at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Wagon_Road and <http://historicalcharts.noaa.gov/historicals/>.
3. G. D. Bernheim, *History of the German Settlements and of the Lutheran Church in North and South Carolina* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Book Store, 1872), 148–52.
4. Botetourt County tax records for May 1789 document both Fred Sr. and Fred Jr., along with their children and horses, but spell their last names as “Limbow.” See Binns Genealogy, 1790/1800 Virginia Tax List Census, online at www.binnsgenealogy.com/VirginiaTaxListCensuses/.
5. Bernheim, *History of the German Settlements*, 179–81, 332.
6. Louis Houck, *A History of Missouri from the Earliest Explorations and Settlements until the Admission of the state into the Union* (Chicago: W.R. Donnelly, 1908), 2:189.
7. Bernheim, *History of the German Settlements*, 331–32.
8. Jerry T. Limbaugh, “Peter Limbaugh (c1770–1846) and Descendants,” (typescript, 1986, Franklin Co. Library, Winchester, Tenn.); Gehrke, “The Ante-Bellum Agriculture of the Germans in North

- Carolina," 146–56; Gordon T. Chappell, "Some Patterns of Land Speculation in the Old Southwest," *Journal of Southern History* 15 (November 1949): 463.
9. Bernheim, *History of the German Settlements*, 239–43; "Christian Limbaugh to North Carolina Assembly, 1805," reproduced in Loren Schweninger, ed., *The Southern Debate over Slavery*. Vol. 1: *Petitions to Southern Legislatures, 1778–1864*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 33. Christian confirmed his Pennsylvania birth in a letter to the secretary of war, 19 April 1815, in M566, Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General, 1805–1821, NARA microfilm.
 10. *New York v. James Cheetham*, Court of Session, 18 June 1810, excerpted in *American Citizen* [New York], 23 June 1810. For the book in question, see James Cheetham, *The Life of Thomas Paine: Author of Common Sense, The Crisis, Rights of Man, etc.* (New York: Southwick & Pelsue, 1809), 226–27.
 11. Minutes of the Rowan County Superior Court, 28 March 1804; (partial transcription) in vertical file of Rowan Public Library History & Genealogy Dept., Salisbury, N.C. Jones's appeal is cited in Schweninger, *The Southern Debate over Slavery*, 1:33.
 12. Minutes of the Rowan County Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, November 1803, 7:237; *State v. James L. Wilie re Bastardy*, Rowan County Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, 21 November 1817, both in Rowan Public Library History & Genealogy Dept., Salisbury, N.C.
 13. *Newport Mercury*, 10 March 1792; Limbaugh military record cited in www.press.uillinois.edu/epub/books/schweninger/s2.html; Richard M. Lytle, *The Soldiers of America's First Army, 1791* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2004), 24.
 14. Mark F. Boyd, "Events at Prospect Bluff on the Apalachicola River, 1808–1818," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 16 (October 1937): 55–60; Thomas D. Watson and Samuel Wilson Jr., "A Lost Landmark Revisited: The Panton House of Pensacola," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 60 (July 1981): 42–50; Thomas C. Kennedy, "Sibling Stewards of a Commercial Empire: The Innerarity Brothers in the Floridas," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 67 (January 1989): 259–62.
 15. The reconstruction of Native American history has been nearly continuous since the 1960s. Among popular accounts that illustrate the culture clash on the Great Plains, two books I still think tell well-written and deeply moving stories are Ralph K. Andrist's *The Long Death* (New York: Collier, 1964) and Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970).
 16. Joel W. Martin, *Sacred Revolt: The Muskogees' Struggle for a New World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 102; 111; Stephen B. Weeks, introduction to *Letters of Benjamin Hawkins, 1796–1806*, in *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society* (Savannah, Geo.: Georgia Historical Society, 1916), 9:7–11.
 17. Dianne Dent Wilcox, "Fort Hawkins and Frontier Georgia," online at www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~gajones/hawkins.htm.
 18. Martin, *Sacred Revolt*, 109.
 19. Johann Christian Burckhard and Karsten Peterson, *Partners in the Lord's Work: The Diary of Two Moravian Missionaries in the Creek Indian Country, 1807–1813*. Translated and edited by Carl Mauelshagen and Gerald H. Davis. Research Paper No. 21, February 1969 (Atlanta: Georgia State College, 1969), 53.
 20. *Ibid.*, 44.
 21. Map of Hawkin's Creek Agency on Flint River, from a Plan Drawn by F. H. Shuman, 1810. Courtesy Moravian Archives, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.
 22. Burckhard and Peterson, *Partners in the Lord's Work*, 18–19.
 23. Big Warrior to Hawkins, 1 May 1809, M-271, roll 1, frame 0629, NARA, as cited in William Gerald McLoughlin, *The Cherokee Ghost Dance: Essays on the Southeastern Indians, 1789–1861* (Macon, Geo.: Mercer University Press, 1984), 375–77.
 24. Burckhard and Peterson, *Partners in the Lord's Work*, 44–45.
 25. *Ibid.*, 48.
 26. *Ibid.*, 70.
 27. Andrew K. Frank, *Creeks and Southerners: Biculturalism on the Early American Frontier* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005).

28. Theron A. Nunez, "Creek Nativism and the Creek War of 1813–1814," *Ethnohistory* 5 (Winter 1958): 3; Boyd, "Events at Prospect Bluff," 66–67.
29. A thorough analysis of slavery in Creek culture can be found in Kathryn E. Holland Braund, "The Creek Indians, Blacks, and Slavery," *Journal of Southern History* 57 (November 1991): 601–36.
30. Burckhard and Peterson, *Partners in the Lord's Work*, 52–65.
31. Merrit B. Pound, *Benjamin Hawkins, Indian Agent* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1951), 224; note by Dianne Dent Wilcox, "Fort Hawkins and Frontier Georgia," online.
32. Burckhard and Peterson, *Partners in the Lord's Work*, 66.
33. Christian Limbaugh to Secretary of War, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Registered Series, 1801–1870, RG 107, M221, National Archives; Pound, *Benjamin Hawkins*, 214.
34. Gary Burton, "Pintlala's Cold Murder Case: The Death of Thomas Meredith in 1812," *Alabama Review* 63 (July 2010), 163–89.
35. John Innerarity, "The Creek Nation, Debtor to John Forbes & Co., Successors to Panton, Leslie & Co. A Journal of John Innerarity, 1812," *Florida Historical Society Quarterly* 9 (October 1930): 73–75.
36. *Ibid.*, 75–76.
37. Ross Hassig, "Internal Conflict in the Creek War of 1813–14," *Ethnohistory* 21 (Summer 1974): 266; Innerarity, "The Creek Nation," 76.
38. Innerarity, "The Creek Nation," 78–86. For a balanced overview of American Indians as both pawns and principals in continental wars, see Robert M. Utley and Wilcomb E. Washburn, *Indian Wars* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1985).
39. Correspondence of Peter A. Brannon, director, Alabama Department of Archives and History, 21 November 1966, cited by Mark Evans, "Christian Limbaugh Timeline," in correspondence with author, 29 April 2004.
40. Benjamin Hawkins to James Monroe, 18 January 1813, *American State Papers* (hereafter ASP), *Indian Affairs*, 4:838; Boyd, "Events at Prospect Bluff," 67–68. For a classic diplomatic history of the Floridas during the War of 1812, see Thomas A. Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People*, 3rd ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1946), 161–77.
41. Horace Montgomery, *Georgians in Profile: Historical Essays in Honor of Ellis Merton Coulter* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1958), 117–22; John Innerarity to James Innerarity, 27 July 1813, quoted in "A Prelude to the Creek War of 1813–1814," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 18 (April 1940): 253; Andrew Burstein, *The Passions of Andrew Jackson* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), 100–106; Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson*. Vol. 1: *The Course of American Empire, 1767–1821* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 187–205, 225–53; John K. Mahon, "British Strategy and Southern Indians: War of 1812," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 44 (April 1966): 285–95; Hassig, "Internal Conflict in the Creek War," 259.
42. "Extract of a Letter from Mr. Limbaugh, Assistant Agent, Dated Creek Agency, June 26," in *Daily National Intelligencer*, 13 July 1813, 2, reprinted in *The War* [New York] 20 July 1813, 18; two letters, Big Warrior to Benjamin Hawkins, Coweta, 4 August 1813, authenticated by Christian Limbaugh, *American State Papers*, *Indian Affairs* (1832), 4:851–52 (hereafter ASP).
43. Merrit B. Pound, *Benjamin Hawkins, Indian Agent* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1951), 232; Benjamin Hawkins to Judge Toulmin, 23 October 1813, ASP, *Indian Affairs*, 4:857; Christian Limbaugh to Benjamin Hawkins, 25 July 1815, Letters Received by the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, NARA microfilm M271, Roll 1 frames 5821–5822.
44. "Claims of the Friendly Indians..." recorded after interviews by Christian Limbaugh, ca. April 1814, enclosed with letter, Benj. Hawkins to Wm. H. Crawford, 1 April 1816, Letters Received by the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, NARA microfilm M271, Roll 1, frames 1115–1123; Benjamin Hawkins to Secretary of War, 7 June 1814, ASP, *Indian Affairs*, 4:858; Claudio Saunt, "Taking Account of Property: Stratification among the Creek Indians in the Early Nineteenth Century," *William and Mary Quarterly* 57 (October 2000): 72–73.
45. Hassig, "Internal Conflict in the Creek War," 259; Bailey, *A Diplomatic History*, 147–48.
46. Nathaniel Millett, "Britain's 1814 Occupation of Pensacola and America's Response: An Episode of the War of 1812 in the Southeastern Borderlands," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 84 (Fall 2005):

- 232–46; Boyd, “Events at Prospect Bluff,” 62–71; Christian Limbaugh to Benjamin Hawkins, 25 July 1815, enclosed with Hawkins to Secretary of War, 27 July 1815, Letters Received by the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, NARA microfilm M271, Roll 1, frames 5821–5822.
47. Benjamin Hawkins, *Letters, Journals, and Writings of Benjamin Hawkins, 1802–1816* (Savannah, Geo.: Beehive Press, 1980), 694; Allen Tooke to Peter Early, 8 September 1814, abstract online at <http://andromeda.galib.uga.edu/>; Hawkins to Limbaugh, 30 October 1814, excerpt published in *The Shamrock* [New York], 19 November 1814, 182.
 48. Benjamin Hawkins to Peter Early, 15 November 1814, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia, online at <http://neptune3.galib.uga.edu/>; published excerpts in *National Aegis*, 21 December 1814.
 49. War Dept. [Monroe] to Hawkins, 17 December 1814, Letters Sent by the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1800–1824. NARA microfilm M15, Roll 3, frame 703.
 50. Remini, *Andrew Jackson*, 1:234–47; Millett, “Britain’s 1814 Occupation,” 254.
 51. Mahon, “British Strategy and Southern Indians,” 300; Hawkins to Peter Early, 20 February 1815, in Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia, online at <http://neptune3.galib.uga.edu/>; Limbaugh to Hawkins, 19 and 25 July 1815; Hawkins to Secy of War, 21 and 27 July 1815; in Letters Received by the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, NARA microfilm M271, Roll 1.
 52. Kennedy, “Sibling Stewards,” 273; Millett, “Britain’s 1814 Occupation,” 246–50; Remini, *Andrew Jackson*, 1:77, 1:326.
 53. J. Innerarity to C. Limbaugh, 20 June 1815, enclosed with B. Hawkins to General Gaines, 14 June 1815, NARA Microcopy M-221, Roll 62, H-157; Kennedy, “Sibling Stewards,” 267–72; Frank L. Owsley, “British and Indian Activities in Spanish West Florida during the War of 1812,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 46 (October 1967): 11–23.
 54. Hawkins to W.H. Crawford, 29 August 1815, NARA Microfilm M271, Letters Received by the Secretary of War Relating to Indian affairs, Roll 1, Frames. 5867–8.
 55. Vicente Pintado, Survey Certificate No. 1855, 8 May 1817, on behalf of Christian Limbaugh, in Docket No. 8, Number 34, 1818, Archivo Nacional Floridas, Havana, Cuba.
 56. Christian Limbaugh to James Monroe, 2 July 1816, in Miscellaneous Letters to the Secretary of State, NARA Record Group 59, as abstracted in Daniel Preston, *A Comprehensive Catalogue of the Correspondence and Papers of James Monroe* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2001), 2:645. For the early lumber industry in West Florida, see John A. Eisterhold, “Lumber and Trade in Pensacola and West Florida, 1800–1860,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 51 (January 1973): 267–80.
 57. John Innerarity to James Innerarity, August 1816, in *Florida Historical Quarterly* 11 (January 1933): 140–41; Owsley, “British and Indian Activities,” 117–23; Kennedy, “Sibling Stewards,” 266–77; 283–89.
 58. ASP, Lands, 4:184; Forbes to James Innerarity, 15 November 1817, 6 April 1819; Limbaugh to Innerarity, 19 February 1819; James Innerarity to John Innerarity, 6 September 1819; Vicente Pintado to Colin Mitchel, 4 September 1819; all in Panton Leslie Papers, microfilm reels 21–22.
 59. The following chart, recently compiled from church and state documents found in the Cuban National Archives by Carmen Blanco, illustrates the main family line in Cuba (up to 1964) that is believed to trace back to Christian Limbaugh.
 60. 1812 Territorial Taxes in Cape Girardeau County, German Township; in Territorial Taxes in the County of Cape Girardeau for the Year 1812, MS 3677 (photocopy), Missouri Historical Society, Columbia; Christian Limbaugh complaint against Edward Pritchard, Havana, 21 May 1821–22 May 1824, in *Sello tercero dos Reales años de 1824 y 1825*, Cuban National Archives, transcribed by Carmen Blanco, Havana, 2011; Passengers and Immigration Lists—New Orleans; Rhode Island Passenger List, Customs Passenger Lists, Port of Providence 1820–1908, 114.

Chapter 4 Carolina to Missouri: The Limbaughs, 1800–1870

1. Craig Thompson Friend, “Liberty Is Pioneering: An American Birthright,” *OAH Magazine of History* 19 (May 2005): 16; Paul W. Gates, “Tenants of the Log Cabin,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 49 (June 1962): 3–31; “Private Land Claims in the South,” *Journal of Southern History* 22

- (May 1956): 183–204; Roy M. Robbins, “Preemption: A Frontier Triumph,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 18 (December 1931): 331–49; Hugh C. Bailey, “John W. Walker and the Land Laws of the 1820s,” *Agricultural History* 32 (April 1958): 120–26.
2. Gilbert C. Din, “Proposals and Plans for Colonization in Spanish Louisiana, 1787–1790,” *Louisiana History* 11 (Summer 1970): 197–98; Friend, “Liberty Is Pioneering,” 18; William E. Foley, *The Genesis of Missouri: From Wilderness Outpost to Statehood* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989), 75–77.
 3. For a perspective on the Spanish New World empire, see Carlos Fuentes, *The Buried Mirror: Reflections on Spain and the New World* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992).
 4. Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 31–47.
 5. *Ibid.*, 57–79; Frederick J. Turner, “The Colonization of the West, 1820–1830,” *American Historical Review* 11 (January 1906): 303–6.
 6. Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 60–63; Din, “Proposals and Plans,” 207–10; Louis Houck, *A History of Missouri from the Earliest Explorations and Settlements until the Admission of the State into the Union* (Chicago: R. R. Donnelly, 1908), 2:283–86.
 7. Houck, *History of Missouri*, 2:167–68, 2:170–76; Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 91.
 8. William O. Lynch, “The Westward Flow of Southern Colonists before 1861,” *Journal of Southern History* 9 (August 1943): 305–6; Houck, *History of Missouri*, 2:167–69.
 9. Frank L. Owsley, “The Pattern of Migration and Settlement on the Southern Frontier,” *Journal of Southern History* 11 (May 1945): 166–71; Herdman F. Cleland, “The Black Belt of Alabama,” *Geographical Review* 10 (December 1920): 379–81.
 10. Ray Allen Billington and Martin Ridge, *Westward Expansion*, 5th edn. (New York: Macmillan), 247–66; Houck, *History of Missouri*, 2:182–83; Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 64–65.
 11. Stuart Banner, “The Political Function of the Commons: Changing Conceptions of Property and Sovereignty in Missouri, 1750–1850,” *American Journal of Legal History* 41 (January 1997): 67–68; Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 98–100; Houck, *History of Missouri*, 2:179–80.
 12. *House Journal*, 3rd Cong., 2nd sess., 28 November, 22 December 1794, 27 February 1795; 4th Cong., 2nd sess., 30 December 1796, online at www.memory.loc.gov; American State Papers (ASP): *Lands* 2:402, 2:404–5; 1803 Cape Girardeau census, in Houck, *The Spanish Regime in Missouri* (Chicago: R. R. Donnelley, 1909), 2:403–7.
 13. Avery O. Craven, “Poor Whites and Negroes in the Antebellum South,” *Journal of Negro History* 15 (January 1930): 15–21.
 14. Owsley, “Pattern of Migration,” 149–66; F. N. Boney, “Nathaniel Francis, Representative Antebellum Southerner,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 118 (October 15, 1974): 449–58.
 15. Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 77; Din, “Spain’s Immigration Policy in Louisiana and the American Penetration, 1792–1803,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 76 (January 1973): 266–75.
 16. ASP: *Lands*, 2:407. Foley discusses the differences between American and French settlements in Upper Louisiana in *Genesis of Missouri*, 82–83. For the 1799 census data, see *Annals of Congress*, Appendix 1805, pp. 1575–76, online at the Library of Congress website, American Memory <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>.
 17. Robert Swanson, “Pioneer Portraits: The Bollingers,” *Missouri Heritage Key* (February 1973): 3, copy in vertical file, Missouri Historical Society, Columbia; E. S. Jett, letter to Missouri State Historical Commission, 17 March 1965, in vertical file, Missouri State Historical Society; Lawrence O. Christensen et al., eds., *Dictionary of Missouri Biography* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 96–97; Tax List, Lincoln County, Kentucky, 1800; Tax Lists, Carter County, Tenn., 1796, 1798, online at Ancestry.com.
 18. Jane Turner Censer, “Southwestern Migration among North Carolina Planter Families: ‘The Disposition to Emigrate,’” *Journal of Southern History* 57 (August 1991): 407–24; Owsley, “Pattern of Migration,” 171.
 19. U.S. and International Marriage Records, 1560–1900, online at Ancestry.com; “German Speaking People West of the Catawba River in North Carolina 1750–1800,” by Lorena Shell Eaker, online at the Statler Forum website.

20. *Dictionary of Missouri Biography*, 96–97; Robert Swanson, “Pioneer Portraits: The Bollingers,” *Missouri Heritage Key*, February 1973, (clip) in Missouri Historical Society vertical file, Columbia, Mo.
21. I am grateful to Mark Evans, the late Noble Limbaugh, and Jerry T. Limbaugh for sharing genealogical information. See also the Statler, Killian, Schell, and Yount family trees, available at the LDS website, www.familysearch.org.
22. His companion on that first trip, for example, may have been William Maise, a slaveowner whose Lincoln County property evidently adjoined Henry and John Slinkard, both later migrants to Missouri. Or perhaps it was Mathias Mass (Ness?), who apparently lived only a couple of farms away from the Yount brothers, three of whom later settled near their Bollinger neighbors in Upper Louisiana. All these surnames are in the 1790 Census for Lincoln County.
23. ASP: *Lands*, 2:571–89; Arthur Goodspeed, *History of Southeast Missouri* (Chicago: Goodspeed, 1888; reprint 1990), 274–6. Thanks to Dr. Frank Nickell, director, Center for Regional History, Southeast Missouri State University, for information on the nature of Goodspeed’s work.
24. Hunsecker information is gleaned from the 1790 Census for Lincoln County. See also *Dictionary of Missouri Biography*, 96–97.
25. Goodspeed, *History of Southeast Missouri*, 274–75; Houck, *History of Missouri*, 2:188; Allan Hinchey, “Stories of Cape Girardeau: Settlement of the Whitewater Country,” *Southeast Missourian*, February 22, 1932, copy in Missouri Historical Society vertical file. Some Bollingers may have arrived months in advance of the main party and started clearing land in the Whitewater district, perhaps to plant the first year’s crops. See testimony in ASP: *Lands*, 7:868–69.
26. For information on the Ramsour family, see Lincoln County Census returns for 1800; also North Carolina Marriages, 1759–1979, online at Ancestry.com.
27. Family heads are recorded in the 1790 and 1800 U.S. Census for North Carolina. For the Spanish census of 1803, see Houck, *The Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 2:403–7.
28. Cabarrus County Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, Minutes, 1797–1805; *Rowan County Estates Records*, North Carolina State Archives File C.R.85.408.1; William H. Gehrke, “The Beginnings of the Pennsylvania-German Element in Rowan and Cabarrus Counties, North Carolina,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 58 (4:1934): 363–68; indenture, Lincoln Co. Court, April session 1803; Goodspeed, *History of Southeast Missouri*, 274–75; Houck, *History of Missouri*, 2:188.
29. Burke County Court Minute Book for 1799–1807, 302; 1807–1818, 167.
30. Censer, “Southwestern Migration,” 408–13.
31. Hannah Benner Roach, “Hans Georg Hartzel: Pioneer of Northampton County and His Family,” in *Genealogies of Pennsylvania Families* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1982), 1:861–62; *Berks County Will Abstracts 1796–1800*, online at <http://berks.pa-roots.com/wills/Abstracts1796-1800.html>. Using Ancestry.com, I found nearly 400 family sheets listing an erroneous death date for Ann Catherine (Ritter) Limbaugh. All evidently were copied without attribution from charts posted earlier on the same site. Ancestry should post a red-letter label warning inexperienced users not to trust any undocumented family factoid.
32. Goodspeed, *History of Southeast Missouri*, 274–75.
33. See the appendix for a list of these Whitewater settlers, along with the dates of their arrival and land claims.
34. For more on pioneer culture, see Craig Thompson Friend, “Liberty Is Pioneering: An American Birthright,” *OAH Magazine of History* 19 (May 2005): 19.
35. Houck, *History of Missouri*, 2:191–92; Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 146.
36. Houck, *History of Missouri*, 2:181; Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 92–93.
37. Houck, *History of Missouri*, 3:403–7; ASP: *Lands*, 7:855.
38. For land commission rules and recommendations, see “Private Land Claims in Missouri,” document number 1173, 27 November 1833, in ASP: *Lands*, 6:707. For List B, see the survey certificate for Frederick Limbaugh Jr., 29 November 1856, in Missouri State Archives.
39. Houck, *History of Missouri*, 2:372; Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 132–37.
40. Houck, *History of Missouri*, 2:373–74; Gates, “Private Land Claims,” 184–88.
41. For plats and descriptions of both tracts, see survey certificates 2219 and 2220, 29 November 1856, in Missouri State Archives.

42. Abstract, Cape Girardeau Co. Deed Book A–B; Deed, Jan. 29, 1807, and conveyance, 26 September 1808, recorded in County Record Book C, Cape Girardeau County Archives, Jackson, Missouri, transcription by Mark Evans, 2004.
43. See the next section for more discussion about this 300-acre tract. It may be the land that Frederick's son Henry first settled on and later gave to his son Frederick III. See also *ASP: Lands*, 2:401.
44. David B. Eller, "George Wolfe and the 'Far Western' Brethern," *Illinois Historical Journal* 80, (Summer 1987): 85–87; Merle C. Rummel, online at www.rootsweb.com/; Ken Shaffer to Mark Evans, October 8, 2003, online at kshaffer_gb@brethren.org.
45. See the USGS website at <http://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/states/events/1811-1812.php>; Eller, "George Wolfe," 85–100; Catherine Wolfe obituary, in [Huntington, Penn.] *Primitive Christian*, 24 June 1879, transcribed in Mark Evans to author, 28 February 2008.
46. *ASP: Lands*, 2:400; Houck, *History of Missouri*, 2:182, 2:189; Rush H. Limbaugh, "History [of the] Old Trinity Methodist Church in Bollinger County, Missouri," (typescript) Missouri Historical Society; Banigh to Wolfe, March 7, 1806, in Eddleman and Jackson, *Abstracts of Cape Girardeau County, Missouri: Deeds Books A/B-F, 1797–1826* (Jackson: Cape Girardeau Genealogical Society, n.d.).
47. Stoddard proclamation, St. Louis, 10 March 1804, quoted in Houck, 2:370–72.
48. *Annals of Congress*, House, 8th Cong., 1st sess., 1185–1200, 1229–30; House Bills, 20 February 1804, 58, online at Library of Congress website; Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 139, 148–58; Houck, *History of Missouri*, 2:385–91.
49. Houck, *History of Missouri*, 2:385.
50. *Annals of Congress*, Senate, 8th Cong., 2nd sess., No. 183, 31 December 1804, 396–406.
51. Houck, *History of Missouri*, 2:413–17.
52. Goodspeed, *History of Southeast Missouri*, 316–17.
53. "An Act for Ascertaining and Adjusting the Titles and Claims to Land, within the Territory of Orleans, and the District of Louisiana," U.S. *Statutes*, Eighth Congress, 2 March 1805; *Annals of Congress*, Senate, 1805 Appendix pp. 1685–86; Houck, *History of Missouri*, 3:34–38.
54. Gates, "Private Land Claims," 188–90; Houck, *History of Missouri*, 3:43–50; Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 170–74.
55. The quote is from Saul K. Padover, *Jefferson* (New York: Harcourt, 1942), 134.
56. U.S. *Statutes*, 8th Congress, 21 April 1806; 9th Congress, 3 March 1807.
57. *ASP: Lands*, 2:603; Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 248–49.
58. Gates, "Private Land Claims," 204; Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 252–53, 246–47.
59. Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 252; *Independent Patriot*, 25 May 1821; 18 August 1821.
60. *Independent Patriot*, 5 March 1825; Robert S. Douglas, *History of Southeast Missouri* (Chicago: Lewis, 1912), 1:79–80, 1:154.
61. *ASP: Lands*, 3:305–17; Houck, *History of Missouri*, 3:43–53; Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 249–51. Sometime before 1805 either Frederick Limbaugh Sr. or Jr. had applied for another 750 acres in addition to the grant made earlier under the Spanish regime, but the commissioners rejected it. See *ASP: Lands*, 3:321.
62. For the legislative history of congressional debates and actions, see U.S. Congress, *Register of Debates, and Bills and Resolutions, 1832–1839*, published online by the Library of Congress at <http://memory.loc.gov/>. For a brief summary of Linn's congressional service, see *Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress*, online at bioguide.congress.gov/.

Chapter 5 Henry Limbaugh and Descendants

1. Cabarrus County Court Minutes for 1797–1805; G. D. Bernheim, *History of the German Settlements and of the Lutheran Church in North and South Carolina* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Book Store, 1872), 311–49.
2. Burke Co., North Carolina, minute book, 134, cited in Jerry T. Limbaugh, "Peter Limbaugh (c1770–1846) and Descendants," (typescript, 1986, Franklin Co. Library, Winchester, Tenn.).
3. For a comprehensive genealogy of Henry Limbaugh's line, see Mark Evans and Barbara Limbaugh Kunch, *Descendants and Ancestors of Henry Limbaugh* (Plano, Texas: priv. print, 2003). See also "Our Limbaugh Ancestors," online at <http://www.limbaugh.net/>.

4. *History of Jackson, Missouri, and Surrounding Communities* (Paducah, Ky.: Turner Publishing Co., 2002), 222–23. Frederick's commission as justice of the peace is recorded in Cape Girardeau County Record Book C (1810), 190, in the Cape Girardeau County Archives.
5. *Niswonger v. Anton*, Cape Girardeau Court of Common Pleas, November Term 1810, Cape Girardeau County Archive Center, Box 11, File 23 of Case 533. The judge may have been referring to the family of Michael Antoni, whose father-in-law, Johannes Steidle, was a passenger of the same ship Frederick took from Rotterdam to Philadelphia in 1753. See Brigitte Burkett, *Emigrants from Baden and Wurttemberg in the Eighteenth Century* (Camden, Me.: Picton Press, 1996), 5–6, 280.
6. Rush H. Limbaugh to author (RHL), 11 June 1973, RHL family collection.
7. William F. Fratcher, "Protection of the Family against Disinheritance in American Law," *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 14 (January 1965): 293–94; Goodspeed, *History of Southeast Missouri*, 316–17; Rush H. Limbaugh, "The Sources and Development of Probate Law," *Washington University Law Quarterly* 4 (December 1956): 419–47. Without acknowledging Governor Harrison's appointment of Frederick Sr. to the Cape Girardeau district court in 1805, Rush ironically expressed some doubts about the qualifications of the Missouri judiciary at that time: "No provision was made requiring legal training as a qualification for service on either court, and it is quite likely that lawyers were not chosen for service as judges on any of the courts created."
8. Johannes, Frederick's first-born, left no record after his 1759 christening, and probably died in infancy. For common American probate principles, see William F. Woerner and Frederick A. Wislizenus, eds., *The Law of Decedents' Estates, Including Wills* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1913), 53–55.
9. Rush H. Limbaugh, letter to Limbaugh Lands, Inc., ca. 1979. The tax information comes from "Territorial Taxes in the County of Cape Girardeau for the Year 1812," MS 3677 (photocopy), Missouri Historical Society. The tax wording suggests that Henry may have preempted the acreage that his father, Frederick Sr., had claimed a mile upstream from Survey 2219—the same land that Michael Limbaugh apparently held for a time. Eventually it came into the hands of Henry's eldest son, George Frederick III. That may also suggest some kind of land-swapping after Fred Sr. died. Michael's preparation to follow his in-laws to Illinois also seems reflected in these tax records. Christian and a partner, Abraham Bluebaker, paid taxes on 150 acres, and Joseph Niswanger Jr. paid taxes on 48 acres, both on lands "originally claimed by Michael Limbach." The older brother, Fred Jr., paid taxes only on his original claim.
10. Rush Hudson Limbaugh, "The Heirs of Hunter Limbaugh Deceased," (1933); "The Family and the Farm," (ca. 1979); to Ross W. Limbaugh, 26 April 1982; to author, 22 May 1973, 11 June 1973, 10 January 1985, 21 June 1988. The anecdote comes from Dr. Joseph McGowan, Sacramento State University at a CCHS convention in 1973.
11. For the Shell family, see Lorena Shell Eaker, *The Shoe Cobbler's Kin: Genealogy of the Peter (Ecker) Eaker, Sr. Family 1701–1976* (Baltimore: Gateway Press, 1982), 1:812–13. In 1814, Henry's nephew Jacob Limbaugh, the eldest son of his older brother Fred Jr., married Mary Ann Shell, one of Michael and Catherine Shell's ten children. Mary Ann's younger sister Delilah later married Henry's son Daniel. More on her later in this narrative.
12. There has been some speculation that the Johnson family was related to the Limbaughs because of an uncited claim that Henry Limbaugh and James Johnson each paid taxes on half of the property of Fred Sr. in 1811. I have found no firm evidence to support either the possible kinship or the 1811 payment.
13. *Salem Gazette*, 9 May 1823, 3; *Baltimore Patriot & Mercantile Advertiser*, 12 July 1826, 2; Goodspeed, *History of Southeast Missouri*, 274–75; Craven, "Poor Whites and Negroes," 15–21; Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 240–42, 252–53; *Dictionary of Missouri Biography*, 96–97.
14. Letters of Administration, 23 June 1833, Probate Records, Cape Girardeau Co., #487 Henry Limbaugh, Missouri State Archives C8332; Rush Limbaugh, "The Family and the Farm," (ca. 1979). Much of Henry's land eventually passed into the hands of Rush's father, Joseph. Rush spent his childhood on that property and remembered seeing foundation stones and pottery shards where Henry's house stood.
15. Federal and state land records are incomplete, but George F. and his brother William eventually secured rights to at least 320 acres in Section 11 of T32N R10E. Federal and county land records

- show that both William and his brother George F. bought and sold land there after 1849. Squatting on Missouri public lands was not legitimized until 1816, when Congress passed a special preemption law for Missouri. It gave squatters arriving before 1814 first right of refusal when federal officials surveyed the property and offered it for sale. See Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 252.
16. Bill Eddleman, Abstracts of Cape Girardeau County Deeds Books G-I, 1826–38, 120.
 17. Douglas, *History of Southeast Missouri*, 1: 404–6.
 18. A facsimile of the original certificate signed by Whybark can be found in Evans and Kuncel, *Descendants and Ancestors*, 245.
 19. *History of Jackson, Missouri, and Surrounding Communities* (Paducah, Ky.: Turner Publishing Co., 2002), 222–23.
 20. Rush Limbaugh to author, 10 January 1985, RHL collection. For an example of historical opinion on the southern fighting tradition, see J.G. Randall and David Donald, *The Civil War and Reconstruction*, 2nd edn. (Boston: Heath, 1961), 32; James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 196–97.
 21. Rush insisted that Daniel had a total of thirteen biological children, including ten with Delilah, but he didn't count the four-week-old infant Josephus, whose name appears on Daniel's headstone in the family cemetery.
 22. *New-Bedford Mercury*, 3 December 1819, 2; Rush Limbaugh reminiscences, in Evans and Kuncel, *Descendants and Ancestors*, 19–20.
 23. For Jackson and the banking crisis, see Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *The Age of Jackson* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1945), 217–41.
 24. The 1835 Limbaugh custody files are in Cape Girardeau County Probate Court, Guardianships 1805–1980 (microform, Missouri State Archives).
 25. A facsimile of the original conveyance mortgaging the property of Michael and Mary Limbaugh can be found in Evans and Kuncel, *Descendants and Ancestors*, 259. The wording on the document confuses Frederick Sr. with his son Frederick Jr., but the description makes clear both the intent and property at issue.
 26. Letter of Geo. F. Limbaugh [sic], Cape Girardeau County, to editor, *The Southern Advocate*, 16 and 20 January 1838.
 27. Bill Eddleman, *Abstracts*, 120.
 28. The documents relating to this case are on microfilm at the Cape Girardeau County Archives in Jackson and the Missouri State Archives in Columbia. I am indebted to both Mark Evans and Kenneth Phelps for sharing information about the case and its outcome. According to one unconfirmed genealogical report, Michael died within ten years of the incident.
 29. Schlesinger, *Age of Jackson*, 134.
 30. Cape Girardeau County, Clerk of the County Court, Justice of the Peace Files 1817–1860 (microform), Missouri Historical Society.
 31. *The Southern Democrat*, 3 August 1850 and 4 October 1851; Jacob Limbaugh estate, Cape Girardeau Probate Court Records, Box 28, 547, Missouri State Archives. Despite the direct evidence from Henry's will, Matilda's link to Henry remains elusive. She may be the daughter of Henry's child Catherine Limbaugh, who was living at his home and presumably unmarried at the time of his death.
 32. Despite the terms of Henry's will, William's sister and stepmother, the two Catherines, had left William's household before 1850. Henry's widow was living with one of the Hartle boys; the fate of William's sister is unknown. See also the pension application of Elizabeth Evaline Limbaugh, 13 September 1893, Philomath, Oregon, online at <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/>.
 33. "Our Limbaugh Ancestors" at <http://www.limbaugh.net/index.html>; Houck, *History of Missouri*, 2:282–83.
 34. Philip Killian, testimony in Cape Girardeau County Circuit Court, 22 September 1855, Missouri State Archives Microfilm, transcription by Mark Evans, 1 November 2003.
 35. Report of Secretary of Interior, in *New York Times*, 9 December 1857, 5. GLO patent records are online at <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/>.

36. Evans and Kuncel's *Descendants and Ancestors of Henry Limbaugh* has extensive genealogical charts as well as census details and obituaries.
37. A copy of Jacob Delph's obituary can be found in Evans and Kuncel, *Descendants and Ancestors*, 34.
38. Still one of the best single studies of western fighting is Jay Monaghan's *Civil War on the Western Border, 1854–1865* (New York: Bonanza, 1955).
39. Joseph Cowgill Maple, *Incidents of the Campaign of 1861 in Southeast Missouri* (Jackson, Mo.: Cape Girardeau Co. Archive Center (n.d.), 2–12; Mary L. Hahn, *Bits of History: Beginning, Growth & Folklore of Bollinger County, Missouri* (n.p., ca. 1969), 71–74.
40. The imprisonment of a Thomas "Liembaugh" is mentioned in Maple, *Incidents of the Campaign of 1861*, 27–28. The National Park Service has a searchable, but incomplete, roster of Civil War soldiers on its website at <http://www.nps.gov/civilwar/>. For additional Limbaugh participants, consult the Missouri State Archives website. For more on Albert T. Limbaugh, see the Pension Application of Elizabeth Evaline Limbaugh, 13 September 1893.
41. Virgie Schoening reminiscence, Emmett Idaho, 1 September 1968, in RHL family collection.
42. Rush H. Limbaugh to author, 10 January 1985.
43. B. Kuncel to author, August 14, 2003; Rush H. Limbaugh to author, 10 January 1985.

Chapter 6 Convergence in the Heartland, 1810–1875

1. For small farmers in the antebellum South, see Eugene D. Genovese, "Yeomen Farmers in a Slaverholders' Democracy," *Agricultural History* 49 (April 1975): 331–42; Carl R. Osthaus, "The Work Ethic of the Plain Folk: Labor and Religion in the Old South," *Journal of Southern History* 70 (November/December 2004): 745–82.
2. The Coward family story can be followed in census records, supplemented with the oral reminiscences of Elizabeth Coward's daughter, Louella Evans (Fruitland, Idaho, February–March 1973). See also Ann Vandepol, "Dependent Children, Child Custody, and the Mother's Pensions: The Transformation of State–Family Relations in the Early 20th Century," *Social Problems* 29 (February 1982): 221–22.
3. Documents in the Missouri State Archives shows one Dudley W. Evans, age twenty, enlisting in the 23rd Regiment Infantry Volunteers in Sullivan County (northern Missouri) 17 August 1861. This may or may not be the Delph family's relative.
4. The Delph–Limbaugh relationship is intertwined, illustrating the endogamous marriages that characterized family life in that era. Jacob H. Delph (1830–1908), a Cape Girardeau farmer, was born in the same farmhouse he lived in all his life, and buried in a coffin he made for himself. In 1867 he married Morgania Jane Limbaugh (1841–1910). Jake's mother, Leah Shell, was the daughter of Michael Shell (1759–1816) and Catherine Mull (1774–abt. 1856). After Michael's death Catherine married Henry Limbaugh (abt. 1775–1833), the fifth son of the immigrant ancestor of this line, George Frederick Lymbach/Limbach/Limbaugh (1734–abt. 1815). In 1842 Leah's older sister Delilah married Henry's third son, Daniel, the father of Morgania. Jake and Morgania thus shared a common grandmother, although she was not the mother of Daniel's children.
5. For overviews of Missouri's political and military situation early in the Civil War, see Jay Monaghan, *Civil War on the Western Border, 1864–1865* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1955); Bruce Catton, *The Coming Fury* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1961), 370–92.
6. *Farmer's Cabinet* [Amherst, New Hampshire] 26 March 1866; 27 December 1866; 21 November 1867; 29 October 1868; excerpt from *Harper's Weekly* in *Farmer's Cabinet*, 21 January 1869; correspondence from Adams Peabody, 4 February 1878, in *Farmer's Cabinet*, 12 February 1878.
7. Correspondence from Adams Peabody, *Farmers' Cabinet*, 12 February 1878.
8. Henry Howe, *Historical Collections of Ohio* (Cincinnati: R. Clarke, 1869), 149–57; John Fiske, *The Critical Period of American History, 1783–1789* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1892), 193–94.
9. ALS, Newton, Martha, and Emily Tucker, Milan, Ohio, 1 May 1870, to Royal and John Tucker; Lefferts A. Loetscher, "The Problem of Christian Unity in Early Nineteenth-Century America," *Church History* 32 (March 1963): 3–7; Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800–1850* (New York: Harper Torch-

- books, 1950), 9; Charles S. Braden, "The Sects," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 256 (March 1948): 54–55; Roger Robins, "Vernacular American Landscape: Methodists, Camp Meetings, and Social Responsibility," *Religion and American Culture* 4 (Summer 1994): 185.
10. Diary of John Collins Tucker, 1 March 1864–27 January 1865; 65 pp. (photocopy of holograph), in Limbaugh-Mortimore Family Collection, Oregon Historical Society, Portland.
11. For a good overview of the Atlanta campaign from a military viewpoint, see Matthew Fortney Steele, *American Campaigns* (Washington, D.C.: Combat Forces Press, 1951), 261–70.
12. Diary of John Collins Tucker, 7–18 May 1864.
13. For more details on diseases and medical practice in the western theater, see George W. Adams, *Doctors in Blue: The Medical History of the Union Army in the Civil War* (New York: Henry Schuman, 1952), 194–244.
14. For a daily summary of military action through four years of war, see E. B. Long, *The Civil War Day by Day: An Almanac, 1861–1865* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971).
15. Adams, *Doctors in Blue*, 185–93; Diary of John Collins Tucker, 15 May–29 November 1864.
16. "The Hospital," in Frank Moore, *The Civil War in Song and Story, 1860–1865* (New York: P. F. Collier, 1889), 312–13.
17. Lowell's sermon is summarized in Sarah Widner, "'Most Glorious Sermons': Anna Tilden's Sermon Notes, 1824–1831," *Studies in the American Renaissance* (1989): 31.
18. Diary of John Collins Tucker, 29 May–25 December 1864; Gregory J. W. Urwin, "'The Lord Has Not Forsaken Me and I Won't Forsake Him': Religion in Frederick Steele's Union Army, 1863–1864," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 52 (Autumn 1993): 318–35.
19. Diary of John Collins Tucker, 3–25 January 1864; J. C. Tucker Discharge Certificate, Company A, 51st Regiment, Ohio Veteran Infantry Volunteers, 3 October 1865.
20. *Farmer's Cabinet*, September 30, 1869.
21. ALS, John Tucker, Leavenworth, Kansas, to father, 2 October 1870.
22. ALS, Royal H. Tucker to Martha and Edward Mortimore, 17 September 1916.
23. Charles R. Tuttle, *A New Centennial History of the State of Kansas ...* (Madison, Wis.: Interstate Book Co., 1876), 583–85; 647–48.
24. Historians have long debated the causes of War in 1812. An excellent narrative history from the regional perspective can be found in Ray Allen Billington and Martin Ridge, *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier*, 5th edn. (New York: Macmillan, 1982), 267–88.
25. Edward C. Smith, *The Borderland in the Civil War* (New York: Macmillan, 1927 [1969]), 10–13; Billington and Ridge, *Westward Expansion*, 248–50.
26. Robert and Sarah's children: Nancy (born about 1795), John F. (abt. 1798), Robert (abt. 1805), Thomas C. (abt. 1805), Charity (abt. 1812), Elizabeth (abt. 1813), David (abt. 1814), Shadrack A. (abt. 1820), Sarah and Susannah L. (birthdates unknown). David and Hanna's children: Charlotte (abt. 1798), William (abt. 1800), Thomas Plemworth (2 October 1803), Alfred (abt. 1816), Newton (abt. 1818), David (abt. 1819), Nancy (abt. 1820).
27. A good overview of expansion, settlement and public land disposal in the Old Northwest, see Thomas D. Clark, *Frontier America*, 2nd edn. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), 131–77. See also Billington and Ridge, *Westward Expansion*, 261–62. For contemporary and modern purchasing power equivalents consult the website Measuring Worth <http://www.measuringworth.com/ppowerus/result.php>.
28. Billington and Ridge, *Westward Expansion*, 249–50, 263.
29. *Western American* [Williamsburg, Ohio], 3 August 1816, 3; *Independent Chronicle* [Boston], 4 July 1817, 1.
30. Howe, *Historical Collections of Ohio*, 162–64, 401–2. Mortimore family descendents owe a great debt to Eva Goeken, a Mortimore descendent, for researching and sharing information about family connections in Ohio and Indiana.
31. *History of Elkhart County, Indiana* (Chicago: Chas. C. Chapman & Co., 1881), 134. The best account of claim club tactics is Allan G. Bogue, "The Iowa Claim Clubs: Symbol and Substance," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 45 (September 1958): 231–53.

32. *Commercial Advertiser* [New York], 22 November 1819, p. 2; *Richmond* [Virginia] *Enquirer*, 30 August 1822, 4. My thanks to Eva Goeken for sharing information on Fayette County tax records. She also found another Mortimore, Israel, paying taxes in Fayette County during approximately the same years, but his connection to David and Robert's families has not yet been determined.
33. A good chapter on settlement of the Lake Plains can be found in Billington and Ridge, *Westward Expansion*, 289–308.
34. *The History of Madison County, Ohio* [1883], 642; Springer, *History of Louisa County, Iowa*, 105, 325–28.
35. I am indebted to Eva Goeken and Gretchen Mortimore for help in researching David Mortimore's personal history. See chapter 1 of this study for further information on Mortimore medical practice in the colonial South.
36. For the Pre-emption Law and its implications in Iowa, see Clark, *Frontier America*, 593–97.
37. *Iowa State Gazetteer* (Chicago: Bailey & Hair, 1865), online at Google books; Harrison L. Waterman, ed., *History of Wapello County, Iowa* (Chicago: S. J. Clarke, 1914), online at Google Books. For reservation policies and problems after the Civil War, see Billington and Ridge, *Westward Expansion*, 591–610.
38. Waterman, *History of Wapello County*, 291; A. T. Andrea, *A Short History of Wapello County, Iowa* (1875), online at Google Books.
39. *Iowa Marriages to 1850* dates the Paul–Mortimore marriage as 25 January 1842, but that obviously is an error. Census records show that Elizabeth was born no earlier than 1830.
40. Hamilton Scott, "A Trip across the Plain in 1862 (diary transcript); Ellen Paul Garlington recollections, 1936 (transcript); both in the Whitman College archives, Walla Walla, Washington. The Iowa governor's remarks are quoted in E. Douglas Branch, *Westward* (New York: D. Appleton, 1930), 518.
41. W. A. Johnson, *The History of Anderson County, Kansas, from Its First Settlement to the Fourth of July, 1876* (Garnett, Kans.: Kauffman & Iler, 1876), 289, online at Google Books.

Chapter 7 Kansas to Oregon, 1870–1900

1. *Farmer's Cabinet*, 26 March 1866, 27 December 1866; 21 November 1867; 29 October 1868; 30 September, 21 January 1869. A contemporary photo of a buffalo bone mound is reproduced on the Kansas Historical Society webpage, <http://www.kansasmemory.org/>.
2. For farming conditions on the Great Plains after the Civil War, see Gilbert C. Fite, *The Farmers' Frontier, 1865-1900* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1966).
3. Charles R. Tuttle, *A New Centennial History of the State of Kansas...* (Madison, Wis.: Interstate Book Co., 1876), 583–85, 647–48; Sara Jane (Fenton) Mortimore, fragment [2 February 1877] to children, Limbaugh-Mortimore family papers, Oregon Historical Society, Portland.
4. William G. Robbins, "Willamette Eden: The Ambiguous Legacy," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 99 (Summer 1998): 189–216.
5. Malcolm Rohrbough, *Days of Gold* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 33–39.
6. The Mortimore story in California comes from a group of eleven letters given to my mother by Greta (McFeron) Poppino, whose mother, Sarah Evaline, was the eighth child of David and Sarah Jane Mortimore. Now part of the Limbaugh-Mortimore family papers, OHS.
7. Michael Williams, "Industrial Impacts on the Forests of the United States, 1860–1920," *Journal of Forest History* 31 (July 1987): 109–18.
8. For more on attitudes toward squatters, see Robert W. McCluggage, "The Pioneer Squatter," *Illinois Historical Journal* 82 (Spring 1989): 47–54.
9. Mary Elizabeth Mortimore to Roxena and Elias Miller, 16 March 1877.
10. Sarah Jane Mortimore to Roxena and Elias Miller, 16 March 1877.
11. Sarah Mortimore to Roxena Miller, 6 February 1877.
12. The late 19th-century farm problem is reviewed in Fite, *The Farmer's Frontier*.
13. Jean Stockard et al., "Moving from Sect to Church: Variations in Views Regarding Sanctification among Wesleyan/Holiness Clergy," *Review of Religious Research* 43 (September 2001): 70–71; T.

- Rennie Warburton, “Holiness Religion: An Anomaly of Sectarian Typologies,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 8 (Spring 1969): 130–32; Roger Robins, “Vernacular American Landscape: Methodists, Camp Meetings, and Social Responsibility,” *Religion and American Culture* 4 (Summer 1994): 185.
14. Martha Tucker, poem, 24 June 1887. For more on Free Methodist foundations, see Howard A. Snyder, *Populist Saints: B. T. and Ellen Roberts and the First Free Methodists* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans. 2006).
 15. Charles C. Lamb to Martha Tucker, 20 July 1896.
 16. Benson Howard Roberts, *Holiness Teachings* (North Chili, N.Y.: Earnest Christian Publishing House, 1893), 11.
 17. Martha Tucker, biographical sketch (undated holograph, ca. 1897).
 18. My mother explored the nature of Martha’s religious obligations and practices when I interviewed her in 1968. See Evelyn (Mortimore) Limbaugh interview, 21 August 1967, Tape 1 Side 1.
 19. Wilson T. Hogue, *History of the Free Methodist Church of North America* (Chicago: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1915), 2:122–34.
 20. Martha later wrote up her experiences from notes and mailed it to her Kansas relatives. See “Our Trip West,” 12 April 1897.
 21. Olive (Mortimore) Peck interview, Portland, 23 June 1970, Tape 6, Side 1.

Chapter 8 Oregon or Bust, 1890–1920

1. The account of J. W. Limbaugh’s sale is interpreted from an account by Rush H. Limbaugh Sr. in a letter to the author, 11 June 1973, in the author’s possession. A prominent attorney in Cape Girardeau for many years, he died in 1996 at the age of 103.
2. Interview with Pauline (Schott) Limbaugh, Emmett, Idaho, 25 June 1967.
3. Rush Limbaugh to author, 11 June 1973.
4. Moses and J. W.’s sister Delilah (born 1855) was also on her own, the only other living child of John P. and Elizabeth (Killian) not named in the will. At the age of twenty Delilah had married her farmer cousin, Thomas Jefferson Cook. He died in 1885, leaving her a widow with four children to raise on a small farm in Madison County. She soon remarried and added two more children to her family. When her second husband, Jacob Cook—apparently unrelated—died sometime before 1901, she married again and moved to Stoddard County. Her third husband, William Smith, died in 1912 but outlived her by six months.
5. Evelyn Limbaugh, interview with Lou Evans, Fruitland, Idaho, March 1973.
6. Interview with Minnie Limbaugh, Sheridan Oregon, 12 June 1968; interview with Elzia Limbaugh, Oregon City, Oregon, 24 June 1970.
7. Luraney Limbaugh Cook lived only two more years. She was the first, but certainly not the last, Limbaugh to marry into the Cook clan.
8. Local economic developments from 1882 to 1905 can be followed in the *Grand Junction News*, available online at news.google.com/newspapers. See also Don MacKendrick, Mesa County History Snapshot, online at www.mesacounty.us/.
9. *Grand Junction News*, 5 November 1898, 2; 5 May 1900, 5.
10. Interviews with Louella Evans and Ouida (Limbaugh) Reins, Culver and Madras, Oregon, 5 June 1976.
11. Interview with Elzia Limbaugh, Oregon City, Oregon, 24 June 1970; *Grand Junction News*, 9 March 1901, 8.
12. Interviews with Pauline (Schott) Limbaugh, Emmett, Idaho, 25 June 1967; Virgie (Limbaugh) Schoening and Elwood Schoening, 1 September 1968; Elza Limbaugh, Oregon City, Oregon, 24 June 1970; Raymond Sterling Limbaugh, Stockton, Calif., 22 May 1982.
13. *Grand Junction News*, 8 March 1902, 26 April 1902; 16 January 1904, 2 April 1904; *Marble Hill Press*, 14 May 1908, 9 December 1909; interview with Pauline (Schott) Limbaugh, Emmett, Idaho, 25 June 1967.
14. Evelyn Limbaugh, interview with Merton Mortimore, 29 June 1974.

15. Interview with Olive (Mortimore) Peck, Portland, Oregon, 24 June 1970.
16. Olive Peck interview, 24 June 1970.
17. Interviews with Evelyn Limbaugh, 21 August 1967; Olive Peck, 23 June 1970.
18. Olive Peck interview, 23 June, 1970.
19. Olive Peck interview, 24 June 1970.
20. Olive Peck interview, Salem, Oregon, 11 June 1968; Portland, Oregon, 27 June 1970.
21. Olive Peck interview, 23 June 1970; William Parsons, *An Illustrated History of Umatilla County* (n.p.: W. H. Lever, 1902), 160.
22. Olive Peck interview, 23, 24 June 1970.
23. Olive Peck interview, 24 June 1970. For a brief but substantive overview of competing religious efforts in the Pacific Northwest, consult Francis Paul Prucha, SJ, "Two Roads to Conversion: Protestant and Catholic Missionaries in the Pacific Northwest," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 79 (Oct. 1988): 130–37. For Spokane Gary and his influence, see Lucile F. Fargo, *Spokane Story* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950).
24. Olive Peck interview, 24 June 1970.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. *Jefferson County Reminiscences* (Portland, Ore.: Binfords & Mort, c. 1957), 56–61.
28. *Jefferson County Reminiscences*, 114–15; *Historical Oregon* (Corvallis, Ore.: Western Guide Publishers, c. 1972).
29. For a general account of Homestead Act rules and application, see Fite, *The Farmer's Frontier*.
30. Olive Peck interview, 24 June 1970.
31. Louella Evans interview, 13 February 1973; Evans and Reins interviews, 5 June 1976.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Olive Peck interview, 23 June 1970.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.; Evans and Reins interviews, 5 June 1976.
40. Homestead registration certificate, The Dalles, Oregon, 19 November 1902.
41. Evans and Reins interviews, 5 June 1976; *Jefferson County Reminiscences*, 62, 127.
42. Evans and Reins interviews, 5 June 1976. Still in my possession is the Mortimore family's tattered copy of *The Cottage Physician*, which Martha and Edward used in central Oregon. My mother Evelyn continued to consult it for her own family as late as the 1940s. Between many pages are clippings and handwritten home remedies passed between family members.
43. Evans and Reins interviews, 5 June 1976; *Jefferson County Reminiscences*, 66, 75–76.
44. *Jefferson County Reminiscences*, p. 64.
45. Martha Cary Tucker to John C. Tucker, Hutchinson, Kansas, 10 August 1903.
46. *Jefferson County Reminiscences*, 164–65.
47. Evelyn Limbaugh holograph note in *Jefferson County Reminiscences*, 165.
48. Evans and Reins interviews, 5 June 1976.
49. Evelyn's notes in her copy of *Jefferson County Reminiscences* recognize the nomenclature problem: "Madras was Palmain when I was born. It may have been officially named in 1902 but not commonly called Madras until 1903." Holograph insert at p. 115.
50. Evans and Reins interviews, 5 June 1976.
51. Elzia Limbaugh interview, 24 June 1970.
52. Ibid.; Evelyn Limbaugh handwritten note in *Jefferson County Reminiscences*, 117.
53. Newspaper article (unidentified and undated) written by Martha E. Mortimore, in Mortimore family scraps, Limbaugh-Mortimore papers, OHS.
54. Evans and Reins interviews, 5 June 1976.

55. *Jefferson County Reminiscences*, 65.
56. John C. Tucker to [Royal H. Tucker], 24 February 1908.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Ibid.*
59. John C. Tucker obituary, 25 December 1910 (holograph ms.).
60. Edward Mortimore grain receipt, 13 October 1906.
61. Elza Limbaugh interview, 24 June 1970; Louella Evans interview, March 1973.
62. Pauline Limbaugh interview, 25 June 1967.
63. *Ibid.*
64. Interview with Minnie (Watkins) Limbaugh, Sheridan, Oregon, 12 June 1968.
65. Pauline Limbaugh interview, 25 June 1967; Elza Limbaugh interview, 24 June 1970; Evans and Reins interviews, 5 June 1976.
66. Pearl Peck to Martha Mortimore, 13 May 1910. See also *Jefferson County Reminiscences*, 77, 153–54.
67. Evans and Reins interview, 5 June 1976.
68. Pauline Limbaugh interview, 25 June 1967; Minnie Limbaugh interview, 12 June 1968.
69. Evans and Reins interviews, 5 June 1976.
70. Peck family genealogy in the author's possession.

Chapter 9 Family Life on the Margins of Prosperity

1. *The Journal of Family History* (1976–present), published for the National Council on Family Relations by JAI Press. For popular guides, see “Your Family, Our History,” *Parade* (21 November 1999). This phenomenal growth of interest in family studies has been aided substantially by the long-standing program of the Church of Latter-day Saints to copy and preserve archival resources around the world. LDS collections are now available to non-Mormons through hundreds of Family History Centers in the United States and abroad. The Church Archives at Salt Lake City complement family history materials in thousands of libraries, museums, historical societies, genealogical organizations, and individual collections in the U.S. and abroad. A list of LDS Family History Centers can be found at <http://www.genhomepage.com/FHC/fhc.html>. For the diminished emphasis in academia, see Jane Turner Censer, “What Ever Happened to Family History? A Review Article,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 33 (1991): 528–38.
2. Sociologists generally accept the “standard model” of preindustrial families, but differ in many details. For a review of the literature, see Sheva Medjuck, “The Social Consequences of Economic Cycles on Nineteenth-Century Households and Family Life: The Case of Moucton, New Brunswick, 1851–1871,” *Social Indicators Research* 18 (August 1986): 233–61.
3. For studies of rural American families in transition, see Kenyon L Butterfield, “Rural Life and the Family,” in *The Family, Papers and Proceedings, Third Annual Meeting, American Sociological Society*, 28–30 December 1908 (reprint, Arno Press, 1972), 106–14; Hal S. Barron, “Rediscovering the Majority: The New Rural History of the Nineteenth-Century North,” *Historical Methods* 19 (Fall 1986): 141–52. For modern family relationships and problems, consult David A. Hamburg, “The American Family Transformed,” *Society* 30 (January/February 1993): 60–69; Patricia K. Kerig, “Triangles in the Family Circle: Effects of Family Structure on Marriage, Parenting, and Child Adjustment,” *Journal of Family Psychology* 9 (March 1995): 28–43; Betty G. Farrel, *Family: The Making of an Idea, an Institution, and a Controversy in American Culture* (Boulder, Col.: Westview, 1999); Brian P. Ackerman, Kristen Schoff D’Eramo, Lina Umylny, David Schultz, and Carroll E. Izard, “Family Structure and the Externalizing Behavior of Children from Economically Disadvantaged Families,” *Journal of Family Psychology* 15 (June 2001): 288–300.
4. Augustinian eschatology filled her mind and materialized in a song lyric she copied from a Free Methodist friend on 10 April 1906, just before leaving Madras: “I see the new Jerusalem descending from above / With its pearly gates and golden streets so fair / I hear the invitation, ‘tis a message of His love / Inviting me the city’s joys to share. / ... I’ve shaken hands with all my friends, / I’ve bid them all adieu. / The last mile-stone I’ve just passed by, / The land appears in view. Hallelujah, to the Lamb of God...” Another copy in unknown hand notes at bottom: “Brother

- Smalley's Song, for Mrs. L. C. Tucker [Martha's mother].
5. Stock certificate, 29 January 1906; Olive Peck, interview with Martha Mortimore Peters, Caldwell, Idaho, ca. 1961; Evelyn Limbaugh interview, Stockton, Calif., 21 August 1967.
 6. Carl Abbott, *Portland: Planning, Politics, and Growth in a Twentieth-Century City* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 27–57.
 7. Martha Mortimore to J.C. Tucker, Postcard, Portland, 26 June 1906.
 8. Olive Mortimore Rodman Peck (hereafter Olive Mortimore), interview with author, Salem, Oregon, 11 June 1968; Doris Rodman Jewett, note to author, 3 March 1993.
 9. Olive Mortimore, interview with author, Salem, Oregon, 11 June 1968.
 10. *Jefferson County Reminiscences* (Portland: Binfords & Mort, 1957), 160; Martha Mortimore Bible, holographic marginal note, 1911, at Hebrews 6:17–19.
 11. For the homesteading efforts of the Limbaugh, Peck, and Evans families in central Oregon, see R. H. Limbaugh, "From Missouri to the Pacific Northwest: Pioneer Families in the 20th Century," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 91 (Fall 1990): 228–57.
 12. Olive Mortimore, interview with author, Salem, Oregon, 11 June 1968.
 13. Olive Mortimore to Martha Mortimore, postcard, Culver, 24 May 1912.
 14. Evelyn Limbaugh, interview with author, Caldwell, Idaho, 27 October 1980.
 15. Olive Mortimore to Martha Mortimore, postcard, 20 October 1913; Doris Jewett note to author, 2 March 1993.
 16. Inez Peck to Paul Mortimore, postcard, 23 November 1912.
 17. Pearl Peck to Martha Mortimore, 11 June 1913.
 18. *Jefferson County Reminiscences*, 142, 165.
 19. *Ibid.*, 133.
 20. Abbott, *Portland*, 57–70.
 21. Evelyn Limbaugh, interview with author, Stockton, Calif., 21 August 1967; Olive Mortimore, interview with author, Salem, Oregon, 11 June 1968.
 22. Olive Mortimore, interview with author, Salem, Oregon, 23 June 1970.
 23. Paul Mortimore, notes in photo album, March 1915.
 24. Olive Mortimore, interview with author, Salem, Oregon, 23 June 1970.
 25. Evelyn Limbaugh, interview with author, Stockton, Calif., 21 August 1967.
 26. For the Mortimores in Colville, see Limbaugh, "From Missouri to the Pacific Northwest," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 91 (Fall 1990): 232–33.
 27. R. H. Tucker, Hutchinson, Kans., 26 December 1917, to Martha Mortimore.
 28. R. H. Tucker to Edwin and Martha Mortimore, 17 September 1917.
 29. Paul Mortimore, Corvallis, 30 September 1918, 3 and 6 October 1918, to Martha Mortimore.
 30. Paul Mortimore, 12 November 1918, to Martha Mortimore.
 31. *Ibid.*
 32. Louisa Tucker, postcard, 14 August 1912, to Martha Mortimore.
 33. Louise C. Tucker obituary, 10 June 1920, unidentified newspaper scrap, family archives; Evelyn Limbaugh, interview with author, Caldwell, Idaho, 27 October 1980.
 34. Minister's license, 8 June 1918, certifying E. M. Mortimore is licensed minister with Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene, by order of Northwest Dist. Assembly, Portland; Evangelist's Commission, 8 June 1918, certifying E. M. Mortimore is commissioned evangelist in Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene, field to be Northwest States, by J. W. Goodwin, General Superintendent.
 35. Martha Mortimore, holograph Bible note, 16 February 1920, at Hosea 6:1–3.
 36. Olive Mortimore, interview with author, Portland, 23 June 1970.
 37. Paul Mortimore, Nampa, Oregon, 6 December 1919, to Martha Mortimore.
 38. Jeannette Mirsky, *To the Arctic! The Story of Northern Exploration from Earliest Times to the Present* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934, 1970), 288–92.
 39. Luther A. Weigle, *American Idealism*, vol. 10 of *The Pageant of America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1928), 200–201.
 40. Paul Mortimore, [ca. 1 May], 6 May 1920, to Mortimore family.

41. Paul Mortimore, 11 May 1920, to Mortimore family.
42. Paul Mortimore, 8 April 1921, to Mortimore family.
43. Paul Mortimore, 14 Apr 1921, to Mortimore family.
44. Paul Mortimore, 4 April 1921, to Mortimore family.
45. Paul Mortimore, 19 April 1921, to Mortimore family.
46. Huldah Mortimore, notes, ca. 1970; "Leavitt's Soul-Winning Team," printed flyer, 1923.
47. Frederick Lewis Allen, *Only Yesterday* (New York: Harper, 1931), chapter 5.

Chapter 10 Turbulent Times, 1907–1922

1. Ray Allen Billington and Martin Ridge, *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier*, 5th edn. (New York: Macmillan, 1982), 459–67; Frederick Merk, *The Oregon Question: Essays in Anglo-American Diplomacy and Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 240; David Alan Johnson, *Founding the Far West: California, Oregon and Nevada, 1840–1890* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 358–61; Gilbert C. Fite, *The Farmers' Frontier, 1865–1890* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966), 189–92; F. Ross Peterson, *Idaho: A Bicentennial History* (Nashville, Tenn.: AASLH, 1976), 123–38.
2. Charles, the eldest, and his recently married brother, Andra, remained behind when their parents and eight siblings left Missouri for Colorado in 1900. Though his older brother decided to remain in Missouri, Andra and Daisy left after the birth of their daughter Ouida in 1901. They were the first Limbaughs to reach Oregon, taking up a homestead near Culver in 1902. Most of their close kinfolk followed two years later, but remaining in Colorado were Marvin and his new wife, Mollie (Dickenson). Marvin and Mollie leased an orchard near Fruita and stayed long enough to start a family. They had three children in Colorado (Richard, Marietta, and Walter) before moving on to Southern California. The senior Limbaughs, John W. and his wife Mary, along with their six unmarried children (Julius, born 1879; Bennett, 1883; Virgie, 1885; Elora, 1887; Elzia, 1890; John Hadley, 1893), as well as Pony and his bride, Pauline (Schadt), reached Andra's homestead late in 1904 after traveling by train from Grand Junction. See chapter 8 for more on this move.
3. Primary sources for this chapter are the following interviews: Orrie Limbaugh, Emmett, Idaho, 12 November 1965; Pauline (Schadt) Limbaugh, Emmett, Idaho, 25 June 1967; Minnie (Watkins) Limbaugh, Sheridan, Oregon, 12 June 1968; Elzia Limbaugh, Oregon City, Oregon, 24 June 1970; Louella Evans, Ouida Limbaugh, and Evelyn Limbaugh, Culver, Oregon, 5–6 June 1976; Sterling ("Ray") Limbaugh, Stockton, California, 22 May 1982.
4. Peterson, *Idaho: A Bicentennial History*, 123–28; Pauline Limbaugh, interview, Emmett, Idaho, 25 June 1967.
5. Bernice Appel Brown, "W. H. Appel," in George Yost and Dick d'Easum, *Idaho: The Fruitful Land* (Boise: Syms-York, 1980), 148–49.
6. Hazel Nichols, "Trowbridge, Hankins and Howard Families, Emmett," in *Idaho: The Fruitful Land*, 227–31.
7. Details of early canal construction and equipment come from an interview with Orrie Limbaugh, Emmett, Idaho, 12 November 1965, cassette tape collection at the Idaho Historical Society, Boise. See also Claire Goldsmith, *In the Shadow of the Squaw: The History and Development of the New Plymouth Community in Idaho...* (New Plymouth, Id.: Sentinel Printing, 1953), 24–26.
8. Nichols, "Trowbridge, Hankins and Howard Families, Emmett," 227–31.
9. Yost and d'Easum, *Idaho: The Fruitful Land*, 3–4.
10. *Emmett Examiner*, 28 April 1910; *Emmett Index*, 22 February 1912.
11. "Idaho Orchards" (Boise, c1912), in Idaho Historical Society MS 544 Pam #16.
12. Yost and d'Easum, *Idaho: The Fruitful Land*, 35–39.
13. Goldsmith, *In the Shadow of the Squaw*, 16–19; "Plymouth Colony," *Incredible Idaho* 8 (Summer 1976): 39–42.
14. *Emmett Examiner*, 23 June 1910.
15. *Emmett Examiner*, 14 April 1910, 2; 21 Apr 1910; *Emmett Index*, 4 April 1912, 1; 9 May 1912.
16. *Emmett Index*, 30 November 1911, 1; 4 April 1912, 1; 27 February 1913, 1; 9 April 1914, 1; 15 October 1914, 1; Yost and d'Easum, *Idaho: The Fruitful Land*, 53–54.

17. Yost and d'Easum, *Idaho: The Fruitful Land*, 57.
18. *Emmett Examiner*, 12 May 1910, 3.
19. *Idaho Statesman*, 23 July 1939, sec. 6, 8; Yost and d'Easum, *Idaho: The Fruitful Land*, 61–62.
20. *Emmett Examiner*, 20 October 1910, 5; Yost and d'Easum, *Idaho: The Fruitful Land*, 49, 57–58; Ruth B. Lyon, *The Village That Grew: Emmettsville, Martinsville, Emmett* (Boise, Id.: Lithocraft, 1979), 239–41.
21. Yost and d'Easum, *Idaho: The Fruitful Land*, 61.
22. *Emmett Examiner*, 16 May 1910, 4; 3 November 1910, 1; *Emmett Messenger*, 27 January 1949, 3.
23. *Crook County Journal*, 24 November 1904, 1, 3; Deschutes Valley Water District, Domestic Water Distribution, Electric Power Generation (Culver, ca. 2000).
24. *Prineville Review*, 17 November 1910, 2, 3.
25. *Emmett Examiner*, 7 July 1910, 1.
26. *Emmett Index*, 10 August 1911, 1; 6 February 1913, 1; 30 December 1915, 1; 6 January 1916, 1; L. E. Bolt, "Incidents in the Emmett Valley," in Yost and d'Easum, *Idaho: The Fruitful Land*, 65, 179–81.
27. *Emmett Index*, 24 September 1914, 6; 29 October 1914, 8; 5 November 1914, 8; 17 December 1914, 8; 24 December 1914, 8; 14 January 1915, 8.
28. *Emmett Index*, 28 January 1915, 8.
29. Minnie Limbaugh interview, Sheridan, Oregon, 12 June 1968.
30. *Emmett Index*, 3 February 1916, 8.
31. *Emmett Index*, 24 December 1914, 8.
32. *Emmett Index*, 11 May 1916, 1.
33. *Idaho Statesman*, 23 July 1939, sec. 6, 8.

Chapter 11 Labor and Love in the Pacific Northwest, 1918–1935

1. Henry Wallace, *Our Debt and Duty to the Farmer* (1925), quoted in Ralph H. Gabriel, *Toilers of Land and Sea* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926), 296.
2. Herbert Croly, *The Promise of American Life* (1909; reprint, New York: Capricorn Books, 1964), 396.
3. Frederick Lewis Allen, *Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the Nineteen-Twenties* (New York: Harper, 1931), chapter 5.
4. George Yost and Dick d'Easum, *Idaho: The Fruitful Land* (Boise: Syms-York, 1980), 51.
5. Minnie Limbaugh interview, Sheridan, Oregon, 12 June 1968.
6. Announcement in *Christian Journal* [Eugene], 4 October 1923.
7. Evelyn Mortimore to Martha Mortimore, February 1922.
8. John F. Rodman, 23 April 1923, to M. E. Mortimore.
9. Evelyn (Mortimore) Limbaugh interview, Los Gatos, California, August 1967.
10. C. J. Davis, 14 July 1924, to Evelyn Mortimore, Mortimore family album.
11. Paul Mortimore, 14 June 1924, to parents.
12. John B. Rae, *The American Automobile: A Brief History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 89.
13. Evelyn Mortimore, "When Dreams Come True," unpublished typescript, May–August 1925.
14. Lu R. Brown, "Rural Centers," *The Norm* (Monmouth: Oregon Normal, 1924), 33.
15. Reata Horney, "William Hubbard Peck," *History of Jefferson County, Oregon, 1914–1983* (Madras, Ore.: Jefferson Co. Historical Society, 1984), 130.
16. Evelyn (Mortimore) Limbaugh, interview, Eugene, Oregon, 4 June 1976.
17. D. Leopold, "A History of Rhinology in North America," *Otolaryngology and Head and Neck Surgery* 115 (October 1996): 283–97, abstract online at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>.
18. Theodore Caplow, Louis Hicks, and Ben J. Wattenberg, *The First Measured Century: An Illustrated Guide to Trends in America, 1900–2000* (Washington, D.C.: AEI Press, 2000), on website <http://www.pbs.org/fmc/bookcredits.htm>.
19. "Average Prices Received by Iowa Farmers: Oats—Dollars per Bushel," *Iowa Agricultural Releases*, <http://www.nass.usda.gov/ia/releases.htm>.
20. Martha Mortimore to Frances Peck, 20 October 1921; J. O. Youngstrom to Mrs. M. E. Mortimore, 24 September 1930.

21. Evelyn (Mortimore) Limbaugh interview, Los Gatos, California, August 1967.
22. Huldah Mortimore, "How It Used to Be" (unpublished typescript, c1987), 17.

Chapter 12 Family Life in the Great Depression, 1929–1937

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2. J. H. Limbaugh, chattel mortgage, Creswell Fruit Growers Bank, 3 March 1930; Evelyn Limbaugh, chattel mortgage, 31 March 1930, deed book 21:325, all in Lane County Courthouse, Eugene, Oregon.
3. J. H. and Evelyn Limbaugh, chattel mortgage, Ontario National Bank, 15 April 1931, deed book, Lane County Courthouse; Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *The Crisis of the Old Order, 1919–1933* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), 171, 174–76; Evelyn Limbaugh interview, recorded Los Gatos, California, 21 August 1967.
4. Quoted in Kevin Starr, *Material Dreams: Southern California Through the 1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 136–37.
5. Huldah Mortimore, 29 July 1970, to author.
6. Winfred E. Garrison and Alfred T. DeGroot, *The Disciples of Christ: A History* (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1948), 207–9; United Church of Christ website, <http://www.ucc.org/>.
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8. Paul Mortimore, "The Song of the Lord," sermon notes (undated ms. notebook); Huldah Mortimore, reminiscences, February 1970, David Mortimore, reminiscences, 10 May 1970.
9. Geo. G. Martin, Milwaukie, Oregon, to N. A. Davis, 18 May 1932.
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11. William E. Leuchtenberg, *The Perils of Prosperity: 1914–32* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958); Floyd W. Matson, "The Anti-Japanese Movement in California, 1890–1942," Thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1953.
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17. Quoted in Irving Settel, *A Pictorial History of Radio* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1960, 1967), 69.
18. Business card, La Grande Music Company, ca. 1935.
19. David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 350.
20. Paul Mortimore notebook, ca. 1940 (microfilm, 1970), frame 235; Evelyn Limbaugh interview, recorded 21 August 1967; David Mortimore reminiscences, 27 May 1970.
21. Evelyn Limbaugh, interview, recorded 21 August 1967. For a classic account of the plight of families and individuals in the depths of the Depression, see Frederick Lewis Allen, *Since Yesterday* (New York: Bantam, 1961), 45–52.
22. John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958), 1; Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 168.
23. Clipping from unidentified newspaper, 18 November 1933.
24. Kobler, *Ardent Spirits*, 352–53; Mrs. T. [?] M. [?] Bolley, 10 October 1933, to Mr. and Mrs. Mortimore.

25. The story was a favorite of Edward's daughter Evelyn, who told it to the author in an interview, recorded 8 November 1975.
26. Martha Mortimore, 22 April 1931, to Paul, Evelyn, and David.
27. Martha Mortimore, financial statement and letter, 13 February 1933, to Paul Mortimore family.
28. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 140–53; J. O. Youngstrom, 29 July 1933, to Mrs. M. E. Mortimore.
29. Fred Firebaugh, 14 May 1934, to Martha Mortimore.
30. Mrs. T. [?] M. [?] Bolley, 10 October 1933, to Mr. and Mrs. Mortimore.
31. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 202–13.
32. Paul Houghton, regional negotiator, Resettlement Administration, 22 October 1935, to Mrs. Martha E. Mortimore.
33. Minnie Limbaugh, interview, recorded Sheridan, Oregon, 12 June 1968.
34. Evelyn Mortimore to parents, 6 February 1934.
35. <http://www.infoplease.com/year/1934.html>; Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 170–75.

Chapter 13 Farm and Home in the Roosevelt Recession, 1937–1941

1. Michael Johnston Grant, *Down and Out on the Family Farm: Rural Rehabilitation in the Great Plains, 1929–1945* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 3.
2. For a good background on rural poverty before the New Deal, see Sidney Baldwin, *Poverty and Politics: The Rise and Decline of the Farm Security Administration* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 3–46.
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4. Wayne D. Rasmussen, "New Deal Farm Programs: What They Were and Why They Survived," *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 65 (December 1983): 1158–62; Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *The Coming of the New Deal* vol. 2 of *The Age of Roosevelt* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959), 34–45.
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7. U.S. Commerce Dept., *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1942*, Section 25, "Farms: General Statistics," (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1943), 694–732; James G. Maddox, "Suggestions for a National Program of Rural Rehabilitation and Relief," *Journal of Farm Economics* 21 (November 1939): 888–89.
8. Baldwin, *Poverty and Politics*, 126–87.
9. Grant, *Down and Out*, 3; Maddox, "Suggestions," 434–46.
10. Evelyn M. Limbaugh (hereafter EML) interview (audiotape, Saratoga, Calif., 1967), in Limbaugh-Mortimore Family Papers, Oregon Historical Society. All family documents and interviews referred to or cited in this paper are located in the same facility.
11. Harold W. Torgerson, "Agricultural Finance in the United States," *Journal of Land and Public Utility Economics* 16 (May 1940): 205; R. C. Williams, "The Medical Care Program for Farm Security Administration Borrowers," *Law and Contemporary Problems* 6 (Autumn 1939): 583–84.
12. Brian Q. Cannon, *Remaking the Agrarian Dream: New Deal Rural Resettlement in the Mountain West* (Albuquerque: University New Mexico Press, 1996), 83–88.
13. Interview with EML and Olive (Mortimore) Peck (audiotape, Salem, Oregon, 1968).
14. Herbert Croley, *The Promise of American Life* (reprint of 1909 edition, Capricorn Books, 1964); Patricia N. Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest* (New York: Norton, 1987), 135–36; Walter P. Webb, *The Great Plains* (reprint of 1931 edition, Grosset & Dunlap, undated), 357–66; William E. Smythe, *The Conquest of Arid America* (New York: Macmillan, 1905).
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- tential in the 1880s, see Robert Strahorn, *The Resources and Attractions of Idaho Territory* (Boise, Id.: n.p., 1881).
16. See the 1911 *Classic Encyclopedia*, online at www.1911encyclopedia.org/1/ID/IDAHO.htm]. Moss's biographical sketch is in Hawley, *History of Idaho*, online at <http://payettecounty.info/bios/gravesdj.html>.
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 18. Hiram T. French, *History of Idaho* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1914), 2:590; *Payette Independent*, 7 March 1895, 1; Lee, "William Ellsworth Smythe," 308–10.
 19. U.S. General Land Office, *Circular ... Showing the Manner of Proceeding to Obtain Title to Public Lands ...*, 1 October 1878 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1878); C. S. French may have traded his Chicago property for the Parker acreage, but it was recorded in Canyon County as a deed of sale. Eleanor Tate interview, 1973, in "New Plymouth People," IHS tape recording transcript OH 501.
 20. *Idaho Daily Statesman*, 8 May 1891, 16.
 21. Brainard's biographical sketch is in French, *History of Idaho*, vol. 3. See also *Ogden Standard Examiner*, 3 January 1892; 12 April 1895; 18 July 1898.
 22. Claire Goldsmith, *In the Shadow of the Squaw: The History and Development of the New Plymouth Community in Idaho* (New Plymouth, Id.: Sentinel Printing, 1953), 24–25. For more on farm co-ops, see Joseph G. Knapp, *The Rise of American Cooperative Enterprise, 1620-1920* (Danville Ill.: Interstate Printers & Publishers, 1968). A classic study of Populism is Solon J. Buck, *The Agrarian Crusade: A Chronicle of the Farmer in Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921).
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 28. *New Plymouth Outlook*, 12 February 1904, 1; *New Plymouth Sentinel*, 8 January 1914, 5; 12 January 1914, 1; Pearl Roney reminiscences, in "Bits of Oral History."
 29. Wallace Harris reminiscences, in "Bits of Oral History."; George Yost, *Idaho: The Fruitful Land* (Boise, Id.: Syms-York, 1980), 91–93.
 30. *New Plymouth Sentinel*, 2 April 1914, 4; 9 April 1914, 4; Harry R. Bean reminiscences, Wallace Harris reminiscences, both in "Bits of Oral History."
 31. Lillie Peterson reminiscences, in "Bits of Oral History."
 32. Joe Campo interview (audiotape, Boise Idaho, 2005); Wallace Harris reminiscences, in "Bits of Oral History."
 33. Report of H. H. Eberle, Special Master, U.S. District Court, Idaho, 10 February 1937, in case of *Oregon Mortgage Co. v. Fred P. French and Hazel H. French, et al.*
 34. EML and Olive (Mortimore) Peck interview (audiotape, Salem, Oregon, 1968); Lillie Peterson reminiscences, in "Bits of Oral History."
 35. H. H. Eberle, Receipt, 16 March 1937; Resettlement Administration Loan Agreement and Request for Funds, 7 April 1937; Annual Farm Business Statement and Farm Plan, 8 April 1937; EML interview (audiotape, Stockton, Calif., 1969).
 36. Maddox, "Suggestions," 436–37; 449; Baldwin, *Poverty and Politics*, 76–115, 418–19
 37. EML to parents, 12 April 1937.
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39. EML interview (audiotape, Salem, Oregon, 1968).
 40. EML to parents, 3 June 1937; Martha Mortimore to family, ca. 13 May 1937.
 41. EML to parents, 10 June 1937; EML interview (audiotape, Stockton, Calif., November 1969).
 42. Olive Rodman to parents, 4 June 1937; EML interview, 1968.
 43. EML to parents, 10 June 1937.
 44. EML to parents, ca. 14 June 1937.
 45. EML interview (audiotape, Caldwell, Idaho, May 1973).
 46. EML interview (audiotape, Stockton, Calif. November 1969).
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 48. FSA Pledge of Cooperation (MS on printed form, ca. 1 June 1939). For New Deal progressive philosophy, see Baldwin, *Poverty and Politics*, 103–8, 267–79.
 49. EML interview (audiotape, Caldwell, Idaho, May 1973).
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